

JERSEY BEAT

No. 41

\$1.50



Yo La Tengo

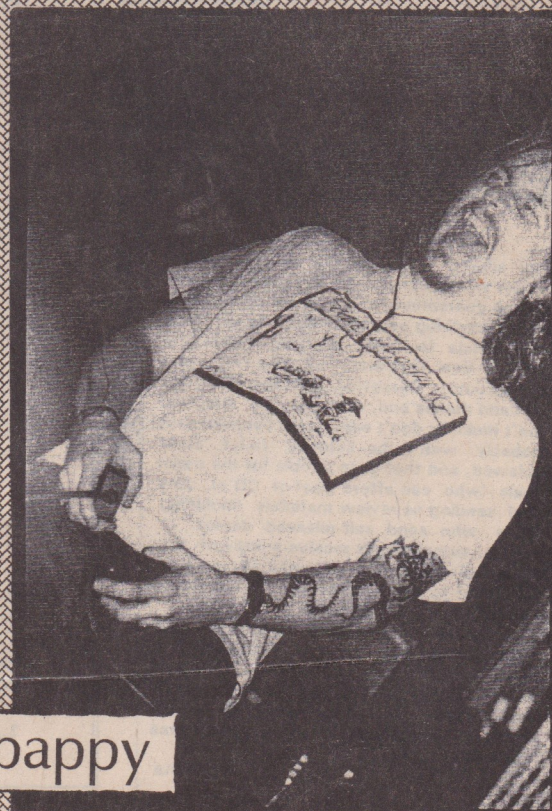
Chikara

The Lost Tour Diary



Nine Inch Nails

Soul Side



Crawl pappy

TWO DOLLARS POSTPAID

JERSEY BEAT

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REVIEWING POLICY

Any album, 7 inch, or CD sent to us for review will be listened to. Beyond that, there are no guarantees, although we do try and review anything and everything we get from local bands (meaning anything within the Greater New York area, including Philly and Connecticut). Cassettes, with the exception of band demos and cassette-only releases, don't make it; don't send them because they probably won't be listened to, let alone reviewed, and that goes double for the major labels (who can afford vinyl or CD's). Any label sending us review materials (including bands who send self-released demos or records) automatically receive a copy of the issue their release is reviewed in, so you don't have to ask us to send a copy or send money to pay for that issue.

I am also doing a bi-weekly column for GOLD COAST newspaper in Hoboken. Any band from the area, or any touring band coming to Hoboken, should send details (date, place, and time, and of course something about the band) at least three weeks in advance.

- Jim Testa

THE TOP TEN STUPID QUESTIONS BANDS ASK THE SOUNDMAN AT MAXWELLS (and the appropriate snappy answers)

10. Is it okay to smoke pot in the dressing room?
(C'mon, be serious)
 9. Do you mean we're going on exactly at 10 p.m.?
(Yes)
 8. Does everybody get their own monitor mix?
(See #10)
 7. How many people can we put on the guest list?
(As many as you want - but you get paid from the door)
 6. What's with all the feedback?
(You didn't do a soundcheck, remember?)
 5. Why do the fuses blow when we run the smoke machine?
(Because they draw more current than a nuclear sub)
 4. Why are all the waiters and waitresses so bitchy?
('Cos your band and entourage, all 15 of them, ran up a tab for dinner and left \$1.75 for a tip)
 5. Is Todd or Steve here?
(See #10)
 4. Can I get more vocals in the monitors?
(Turn your amp down)
 3. What does the other band sound like?
(I don't know, I never heard of them either)
 2. Is there any food waiting for us in the dressing room?
(What dressing room?)
- And the No. 1 Stupid Question that bands ask the soundman at Maxwells...
1. Do you think we can play here again on a weekend?

by ANDY PETERS

How I Spent My Summer Vacation

Remember those godawful essays they used to make you write in grade school every September - "How I Spent My Summer Vacation." And the other kids would have wonderful stories about going away to camp, or visiting Europe with their folks, and all you did all summer was swat flies, shoot hoops, and watch the old man sweat in his underwear every night in front of the television, swearing at the Mets. Well, this is our Summer Vacation issue, more or less. Bruce Gallanter remembers some memorable moments in clubland, while I recount my various adventures at the New Music Seminar and many other gigs in "Diary Of A Rock Critic." Then we've got Brian of The Lost and his tour diary, a fetid journey through the armpit of America, from the vantage point of an overcrowded van with a leaky oil pan. We've got interviews with a few other bands that spent the summer touring the country, from the industrial angst of Nine Inch Nails to the laconic charm of Hoboken's own Yo La Tengo. And there are new columns on industrial dance music and hard rock. Life goes on, fall turns to winter, we all get a little older, and just as sure as death and taxes, another 80 records will come in the mail before we do this again.

2 Live Crew, Too Much Joy, and Two or Three Thoughts On Censorship

It used to be that entertainment writers could concern themselves with entertainment and leave politics to the folks on the editorial pages, but as anyone who follows the headlines knows, that's no longer the case. There's an ugly tug of war going on between two disparate factions of our society - the avant-garde of the performance world, trying to extend the boundaries of the "acceptable" to include evermore graphic depictions of sex and violence, and the more conservative factions of our nation, who want to draw the line between art and obscenity with the full force of the law.

Let me add that if there's anybody I'd like to see serve a little jail time in this whole mess, it's Too Much Joy, the smug suburban bar band who became self-appointed defenders of the Constitution and got themselves arrested by singing a bunch of 2 Live Crew's songs in the same Florida auditorium. Sure, there was an issue here - why 2 Live Crew and not Andrew Dice Clay? Racism? Yes, obviously. But an obscure white pop band really doesn't have any role in the controversy, except as a cheap publicity stunt (engineered by David Geffen, no less) designed to make them as famous as 2 Live Crew. You really want to pat these guys on the back for going to Florida and mouthing the same woman-hating obscenities as 2 Live Crew? My heroes have to meet higher standards than that.

I wish I had some wise, sage answer to all of this, but I don't. On the one hand, I'm a First Amendment absolutist, going back to my days as a liberal commie pinko subversive journalism student at Rutgers. And yet, I'm old enough now to realize that it's time to draw some lines.

First, there's a difference between censorship and commerce. If the government says, "you can't say that," or "you'll go to jail if you say that," that's censorship. If a record label (or publisher, or newspaper editor) says to one of their employees (and that's what bands and rap groups are, employees), "We don't like this, we won't put it out," that's business. The First Amendment protects your right to free speech; it doesn't say anything about making a buck. Frankly, I am infuriated that people who believe as I do in the First Amendment have our backs up against the wall defending scum like Andrew Dice Clay or Guns'N'Roses or Two Live Crew. If records labels would just police themselves a little better - and not release crap that shamelessly denigrates and defames women, gays, or other minorities for a cheap laugh and a quick buck - this whole mess wouldn't have started in the first place. If the bands want to cry censorship, fine -- let them put their own records out. If 16 year old kids in neighborhood hardcore bands can do it, Guns'N'Roses sure could.

And in the case of Two Live Crew (and yes, I have heard the whole record), let's consider this: Retailers who sell books and magazines do NOT sell sexually explicit materials to minors. Publishers can publish that stuff, stores can sell it - but it's kept in a separate part of the store, and considered suitable for adults only. Why should records be treated any differently? Can you really defend the right of a 10 year old boy to hear a couple of jiveass rappers brag about ripping a woman's hymen apart with their oversized tools? Gimme a break. Maybe listening to that sort of music at a young age won't cause teenage suicides, but how's a kid going to grow up with any sort of respect for women if he's rapping to 2 Live Crew from the time he's old enough to hold a boombox in his hand? And without that sort of sexual maturity, that kid's going to perpetuate the inner city cycle of irresponsibility - bang the bitches, get 'em pregnant, and walk out on 'em. And start another generation of fatherless kids who can grow up to rap about what studs they are.

No, it doesn't wash. Someday, and probably soon, a band or a songwriter will get arrested or have his records confiscated because of an inherently political message - an obvious violation of the First Amendment, and you can believe I'll be the first one to man the battlements. But as for 2 Live Crew, the Diceman, and that ilk, keep those records under the counter and only sell 'em to any moron with a valid I.D. who wants to buy that garbage.

Help! I am in desperate need of a cheap, reliable source for veloxed or half-tones. A student with access to either a high school or college graphics department would be perfect. If you can help, get in touch. I'm not talking free, just reasonably priced, ok? Secondly, if you live in or near New Brunswick and wanna be a writer, here's your chance. There's a slew of bands down there I'd love to corral for an interview. Again, drop us a line if you're interested. And speaking of writers, this issue marks the debut of our new "Hard Rock" columnist, Craig Donner, as well as the second installment of our industrial/dance column. And finally, I'm now doing a bi-weekly "alternative rock" column for Gold Coast, the big weekly newspaper in Hoboken. If your band is from Hoboken and playing out, or if you're in a band that's coming to play Hoboken, please let me know (remember, I need 2-3 weeks notice due to the deadlines) and I may be able to get you some mainstream press.

Okay, other business: Thanks to Chris Laless for the cartoons, Jim Benson for the hometown dirt on Nine Inch Nails, and everybody who bought a copy of #40. We turned middle-age with a bang - the issue completely sold out. Things ran long this time around and we had to cut and paste a bit (the NIN interview is an edited version of the actual interview transcript). Note to Frightwig, The Offspring, and Anthrophobia -- you have to answer your mail from me if you want to be in my zine. I'm sorry, but it's a pet peeve. Hey, got the new Goo Goo Dolls advance cassette and it RULES. Check it out. Buy stuff from our advertisers and give Mike Bullshit a ride if you spot him hitchhiking across America. Okay, till next time...

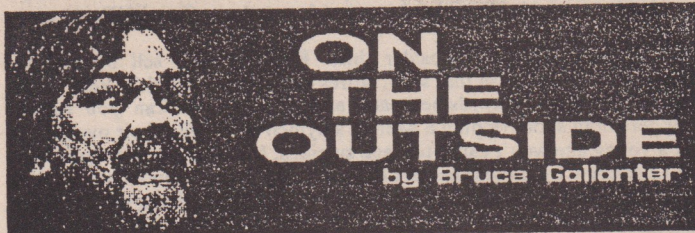
- Jim Testa

NEW YORK CITY is a city of contradictions. In the summer-time, these go to extremes. While most folk escape to the Joisey shore (yuck) or Fire Island (yawn) to get their yearly supply of skin cancer, I worked fulltime in Soho selling CD's and vinyl to the few. The town is hot & sticky & smelly, and often overrun by rats, roaches, bums, drug addicts. Racial violence is at an all-time high. Why do I stick around after work? 'Cause I'm a music junkie & enjoy living on the edge. Yeah, right. At least the clubs are less crowded, only the real dichards put up with it... And some new clubs opened up this summer - Chase, the Spiral, the Marquee, Woody's, Kilimanjaro, and 15 Waverly. There's hope yet.

One of the great things about NY in the summer is the abundance of free gigs at places like Central Park's Summerstage, Lincoln Center Outdoors, the South Street Seaport, and the World Financial Center. Pop, Jazz, Latin, blues, gospel, and the next big thing, Worldbeat. As the pop mainstream grows blander & more predictable, I see larger crowds at SOB's and Kilimanjaro. Oddly enough, as the racial division seems to get worse in the Apple, people of all colors get down together at these gigs. This is what music should be about.

Baaba Maal from Senegal put out a lovely folkie duo release on Mango last year, yet when his large band hit the CP stage, they brought down the house. Singing from the depths of his soul, the talking drummers of Maal's band spoke to everyone. Another superb singer from Senegal is Youssou N'Dour (on Virgin), whose Seaport gig also got everyone jumping.

European Worldbeat has also exploded, with two other Central Park gigs blowing the audience away this summer: With a name like Ivo Paposav & His Bulgarian Wedding Band, you'd think "definite corniness." Totally wrong. If this is wedding music, then the couple must be on speed! Ivo & Co. smoked thru their set, leaving all stunned at the speed & intensity of their music. The front line of clarinet (Ivo), alto sax, and accordion wailed one amazing solo after another. They were backed by an equally fierce jazz/funk electric rhythm section. Their first effort on Hannibal is a must! The other superb Central Park show was by a Greek psychedelic/funk-rock unit called Annabouboula. Although I've seen three other shows by them this year at SOB's, they really unleashed their full force on the big stage. The 3 main ingredients here are the powerful voice of Anna Paidoussi, the invigorating Eastern clarinet by George Stathos, and the trance-inducing electric guitar of George Sempepos. Their first release on Shannachie is skeletal compared to their live attack, but still worth checking out.



At last count, I've found over 50 releases in '89 by female vocalists worth hearing. This year's count isn't nearly as high, but there are a number of newer singers worth noting. On my birthday (June 19), I was treated to the delicate, fragile beauty of Lori Carson and her trio at the Bottom Line. Lori's songs have a certain naked, melancholy charm that some find too precious. I find them completely endearing, as is her A&M debut. Another subtle gem is by Penelope Houston, former lead singer of the early Frisco hardcore unit, the Avengers. Very folky in texture, fine voices and produced nicely by the late Snakefinger.

Another unexpected delight was Philly's Baby Flamehead, who played to only a few hip folks at Wetlands during the jive New Music Seminar. BF are an odd mix - quirky female lead singer, acoustic lead guitar, 3-string stand-up mariachi bass and minimal drums. Strange behavior and tunes take off into weird detours. I'm anxious to hear their current release.

Newer bands around town who gigged this summer: COP SHOOT COP rule!!! Each fucking show, they roar and displace my molecules. No lead guitar, just two hot throbbing, pounding, abusive electric bassmen, a unique sampling keyboard wiz who

makes ugly but effective noises, and a primal percussion monster enclosed in a triangular suspended metal rackjob. Total catharsis! Let's not forget Drunken Boat, who I thought sucked six months previous. They played throttling, churning, almost Hawkwind-like guitar blur at the Knitting Factory on July 4th. A spastic lead singer with moves that somehow fit just right. Sign 'em up quick!! Another NY combo who wowed me during NMS was Bosh. Mostly an instrumental power quartet, half of whom were in Zahar last year (when Zahar were cool - no more). Stinging lead guitar by Hahan Rowe, smokin' drums, and pumping percussion. They too are without a deal.

Another band to watch out for is the Sirens. They're lead by stickmaster Chris Cunningham, fronted by the oft-riveting singer/dancer/stripper Dina Emerson, propelled by an ex-Swans drummer, plus newer members Steve Buchanan on scary elec. alto sax and Michelle Kinney on cello. Their sound is a dense, progressive, swirling brew. It's difficult to take one's eyes off Dina, who dances like a possessed spirit. They have a self-produced release in the can and are searching for an appropriate label.

Surprise Gig Of The Year: Twenty years ago this summer, I saw my then-favorite band, The Mothers Of Invention, at the Fillmore East. Opening was the totally unknown Hampton Greaseband from Atlanta, GA. Their pudgy lead singer came out in a suit, started normally, but proceeded to get weirder each song, ripping off articles of clothing one by one. They had a number of odd characters wandering on stage, playing golf, sleeping... and a double guitar frontline played this frenetic jazz/rock insanity, way ahead of its times. Their first and only (double) lp, Music To Eat, was the worst-selling album in the history of CBS. Their crazed lead singer, Col. Bruce Hampton, or Hampton B. Coles, has released four amazing but bizarre lps on Landslide, out of Atlanta, since 1970. He snuck into NYC twice previous to this summer, but finally, I got a chance to reckon with him and his current quintet, The Aquarium People, at Wetlands, the last set of that bullshit Seminar. Once again, 15 people turned up. This current lineup features a perfect, all-powerful quintet, with a three-guitar frontline. The guitar hero on the left had long red hair, flannel shirt, looking like he stepped out of the Marshall Tucker Band, yet played Strat solos quick & smooth as Alan Holdsworth, but with more feeling. The string bender on the right was a 20 year old with a punk hairdo, playing incredible jazz solos on electric mandolin. The rhythm section featured longtime Hampton cohort Lincoln Metcalfe in goofball shorts. Col. Hampton (Retired) sang, spewed forth his righteous Beefheartian Southern-styled twisted vocals unlike anyone on this planet. He also whipped out an occasional Zappa-like guitar solo to boot. A totally amazing set throughout!! Instead of an encore, Hampton told a strange short story I am still trying to figure out. It turns out that the Wetlands liked these dudes, so they will be back. Keep your eyes open!



YO LA TENGO

The Jersey Beat Interview

"Yo la tengo," the phrase, means "I got it" (or something really close) in Spanish. Yo La Tengo, the band, have got the proverbial "it" too, but they don't shove it in your face. The creative core of Ira Kaplan and Georgia Hubley choose to quietly exist in Hoboken, in a house only three blocks from Groove Street. When they're not there, they're touring like crazy, working harder than Barnaby, listening to "Wake Of The Flood" and getting high... But seriously, by now you should be aware of their latest record, *Fakebook*, a collection of not-so-obvious covers and re-worked originals done acoustically.

Sitting in the almsot waterfront offices of Bar/None Records, the happy couple chatted away in between sips of Samuel Adams beer. They didn't offer me any, by the way. It seems what was supposed to be a really in-depth look at this incredibly talented and very hard-working band rapidly turned into an in-depth look at their relationship with Das Damen and the sports abilities, or lack thereof, of good ol' Jim Testa. Ira and Georgia are extremely pleasant people who have great patience, seeing me through numerous technical difficulties and my running out of questions 15 minutes into the interview. Sometimes the most insight is gained from spontaneous conversation. I've made enough excuses. On with the interview...

by Jodi Shapiro

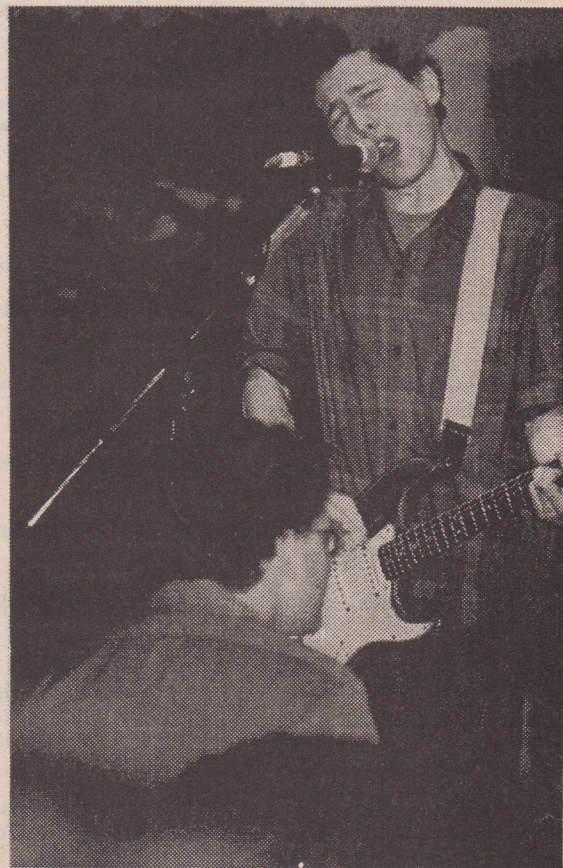
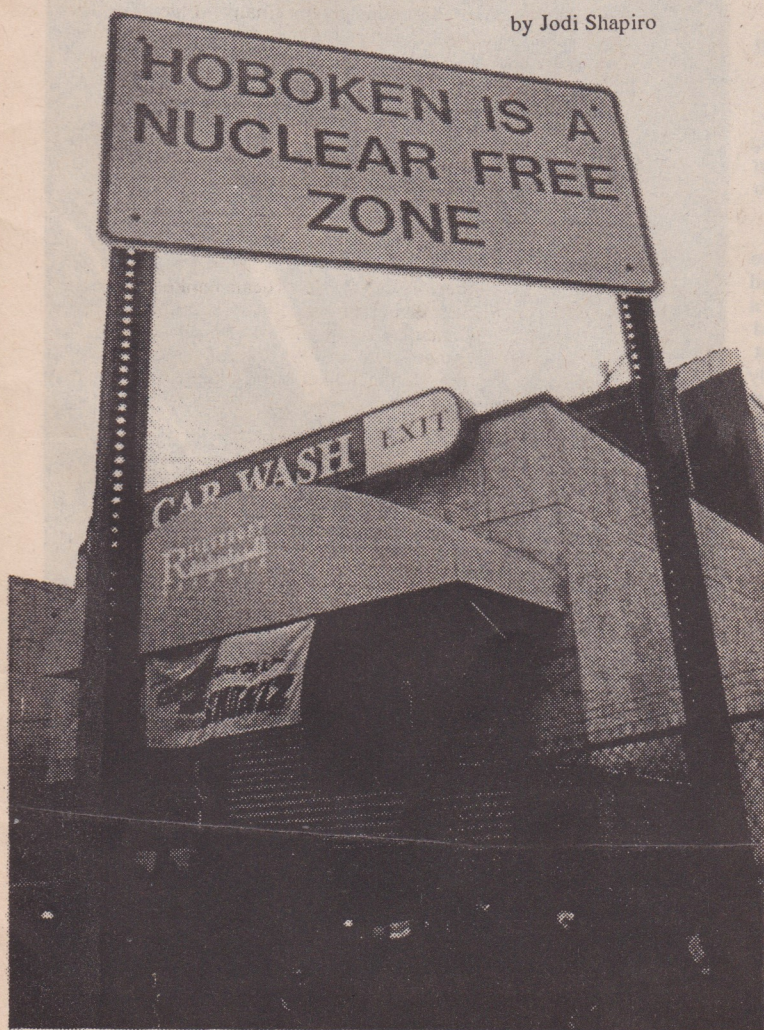


Photo by Jim Testa

Ira: 'We're not a professional rock band. We're not marketing our look and our sound'

Jodi: How long have you known each other?

Ira: Me and Georgia met about ten years ago, maybe more, I don't know. It's getting up there.

Georgia: No, I don't think it's more. (laughing, shaking her head.) Ten years, that's all!

Ira: We had a lot of mutual friends. That's how we met. We both had instruments, which we didn't use very much, and we played. The more we played, the more we wanted to... The first time we played, I think, was in my parents' house, in the basement. We'd organize these birthday parties and learn a bunch of cover songs and play those, get a whole bunch of other people to sing them. We put a lot of work into these things, and eventually it became easier to start our own band. It's not much different than what we do now.

Georgia: Nothing's really changed.

Ira: We've come almost full circle, we do almost all covers now.

Jodi: That was that band A Worrying Thing, right? (Georgia groans)

Georgia: I was going to say, wasn't Testa at some of those parties? He put you up to this, right?

Jodi (very embarrassed): Uh, yeah. He gave me all these weird questions to ask. You can forfeit that one if you want.

Ira: That was the mid-party band phase, we were still playing all cover songs, the same four people.

Jodi: Isn't it hard getting a different bass player for each record? Do you think the music suffers?

Georgia: It does get hard. We're getting used to it, actually. What it's done is make Ira and myself more comfortable working on songs and writing them ourselves. I'm sure it's different for bands that have been "a band" for a long time. I'm curious to know how that works.

Ira: I think that's one of the reasons we're as wide-ranging as we are, because it's just the two of us so often that we just sat around the house and sang together, played guitar together. I think, in a way, it makes it easier to be a band. We're married. We spend our time together because that's our idea of fun... We're not playing with other people that play well together but don't really like each other. There's lots of band dynamics type of things that don't really enter into it because we don't have these... (trails off). That's the bright side of not having a bass player. The drawbacks are obvious, but we have done it for a long time.

Jodi: When are you guys going to tour?

Ira: Well, we're going to Europe for two weeks, electrically. It's not really for this record but I hope it doesn't hurt. Then when we come back, we're going to cover the whole country.

Jodi: Which do you like better, playing electric or acoustic?

Ira: Fortunately, we don't have to decide. I would say that if we had to give up one, I'd prefer to play electrically. I really like doing both, however.

Georgia: (laughing) Is that a surprising answer? It shouldn't be too surprising, otherwise we wouldn't be doing both.

Jodi: Sometimes with electric, you can get more out of a song. Like, "Barnaby, Hardly Working" - I don't think the acoustic version feels the same way as the electric.

Ira: I think they're both really enjoyable ways to play. We thought it would be a funny idea to play "Barnaby" without all the feedback. We played in Boston last Saturday and we started

playing electrically, and one of the first songs we played was "Barnaby." Later on, somebody yelled for it. I didn't know if it was somebody being obnoxious or someone who only knew the acoustic version and didn't recognize the electric version. Maybe they came in late, I don't know.

Jodi: (after a long discussion of Ira's participation in Dr. Janet, the supergroup session with various members of Das Damen, Skunk, the Screaming Trees, and others...) What other side projects have you been involved with?

Ira: Well, we produced that Jersey Beat turntable hit, Burgoo, by Antietam, which Jim Testa has ravaged on a number of occasions. I played guitar with Fish And Roses, but not lately.

Georgia: Nobody ever asks me to do side projects. Maybe this will inspire people to call.

Jodi: Here's an original question: Why did you decide to record an album of cover songs?

Georgia: Part of why we decided was... once someone was making fun of us and said it was too bad we didn't have enough confidence to write more of our own songs because all the ones on the record that are original were really good. Well, it was really that the way we play acoustically, we play a lot of covers. I do a lot more singing in that setting. It was easier for me to sing songs that I already knew. We picked songs we liked and ones we already had been doing for a while.



Photo by Andy Peters

Ira: We had a list of about 100 songs we had done acoustically at one time or another. We just went down the list and picked the ones we thought would be good to record. When we play live, we don't "You're Gonna Miss Me" but it didn't seem like the world needed another recording of it.

Jodi: I don't have anymore questions, not good ones, anyway. Why don't you think of some questions and I'll pretend that I asked them. Then I'll seem like a better interviewer.

Ira: Okay, Georgia, who's your favorite bass guitarist?

Georgia: My favorite bass guitarist?

Ira: Okay, three of your favorite bass guitarists.

Georgia: This is like the "what's your favorite song" question. I like Gene (Holder), 'cos he's our pal. I like Stephan, I like bass players that play with us.

Ira: I mean from your records. From your huge record collection. (dramatic pause) Arthur Killer Kane?

Georgia: He's from the Flaming Groovies, right? Aaaaah!

Ira: Stop the tape! (fit of giggles)

Georgia: I knew it was one of those guys. Billy Wrath?

Ira: We can't stop playing records. We're missing out on a lot of great tv!

Jodi: What do you listen to these days?

Ira: The Clean, Teenage Fan Club... The Bats, Shonen Knife... not the comp, the real group.

[At this point, my tape recorder stopped, unnoticed. About 10 minutes went by, including a really good conversation about... well, never mind. It's not on tape anyway, so it doesn't matter.]

Ira: Ok, Georgia, I'm going to ask you some questions and this time I want some answers.

Georgia: I've been giving you answers!



Photo by Andy Peters

Ira: Well, you're kinda ducking them. Alright. Name a song that you like more than you thought you would.

Georgia: I have a feeling these aren't the questions you wanted to ask.

Jodi: Let him have his fun.

Georgia: Ok, let him have his way... Some of my favorite bands I didn't used to like. Mission of Burma! I didn't really like them, but when I heard their single ["Academy Fight Song"] I heard how great they were. I thought they were cute, but...

Ira: What about you?

Jodi: Groups I didn't used to like? Hmmm. Das Damen, but I love them now. That's all I'm gonna say. How about you?

Ira: I still don't like Das Damen, so it can't be them. And I ALWAYS liked Mission of Burma.

Georgia: I don't think that dry wit is going to come through on paper, Ira.

Ira: Apparently. (another fit of giggles)

Georgia: They're okay.

Ira: I'm kidding. No, it would be worth it just to have that quoted and see poor Lyle's face.

Georgia: Don't tell Lyle, but...

Jodi: Not a very good drummer, is he?

Georgia: See, that's the real weakness. Say anything about his drumming...

YO LA TENGO

Jodi: Maybe you should steal their bass player.

Georgia: Oh, in fact, before he joined, we were investigating him. It was right when he joined, we were going to try and call him. We share a rehearsal space with them.

Ira: So if we ever want to play with their equipment...

Georgia: We know exactly how it's set up. I played Lyle's drums once. He kinda got mad. They're like up to here with me (points to her neck)

Ira: They're very Keith Moon-ish.

[totally changing the subject...]

Georgia: Did Jim (Testa) go bowling with us too?

Ira: Yeah. He was a good bowler.

Jodi: Tell me more! I love dirt about people. Especially the cringe sort of stuff.

Ira: Did he tell you about playing softball with us?

Jodi: No

Ira: Now that's dirt! See, he'd tell you about bowling, not about softball. Softball's not his best sport. That's dirt for ya.

[Inevitably, the topic of major labels came up. I asked if they felt suitable for a major label]

Ira: We know what we're not. We're not a professional rock band. We know we're not marketing our look and our sound. A band that sets their sights on getting a major label contract doesn't put out a ten-minute feedback song. And then assuming that they make that mistake, they don't put out an acoustic album of covers for their next record. We're not naive... We know that if we set our sights on that main goal... (Georgia grabs the cassette recorder to make sure it's working) ...What, you don't want this on tape? (laughs) You want these pearls preserved! I wish we were a bit more popular.

Georgia: I think people fall into a trap where they think that it's the golden egg, that you're going to get there and it's going to be great. Things just don't work out like that.

Ira: When I saw your question here, she has written here, "How much time do you devote to the band? Is it a 24-7 thing or do you have other jobs?" and I never --

Georgia: 24-7 Spyz?

Ira: I interviewed Kiss once.

Jodi: Really? How did it go?

Ira: I didn't do such a good job. I stayed up the whole night before and then I went to interview them. I was really tired and couldn't really talk. They weren't wearing makeup and they were in this gigantic room, a hotel conference room, and their manager was there. They couldn't believe, I think, that they had to get out of bed for this.

Georgia: Oh, for you? What was this for, The Face?

Ira: No, the Soho News. They were sitting around this huge table, saying "C'mon, ask us a question!" Finally they couldn't take it anymore and they started talking about shooting up for 15 or 20 minutes and how all they did was shoot up in their eyes and their manager was like (rolls his eyes), so he moved in to sit with us.

Jodi: Okay, to wrap it all up, Ira, what was the worst interview you ever sat through?

Ira: Could be... No. Dwight Twilley was worse.



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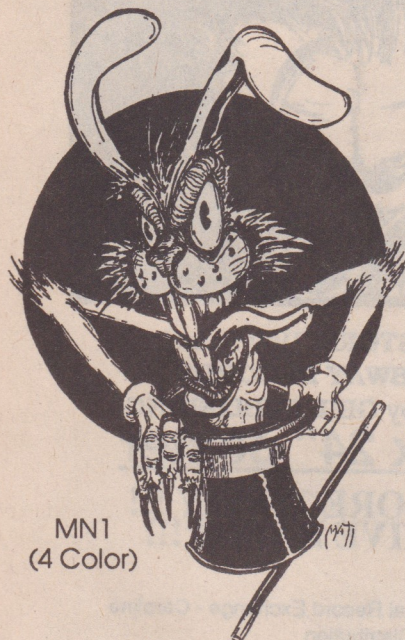
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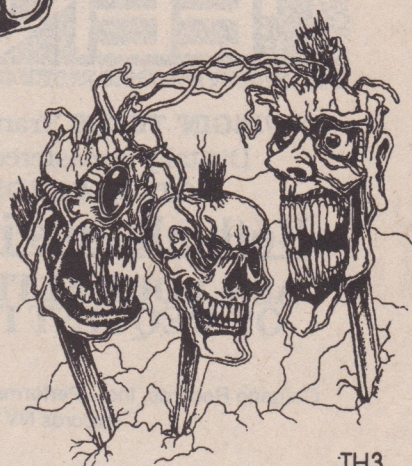
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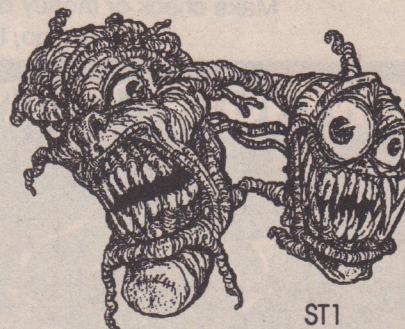
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Like a lot of people, I discovered Nine Inch Nails through the first album, Pretty Hate Machine - which I didn't like. Its fusion of hard rock and industrial sampling struck me as an uneasy compromise -- it didn't strike the dance groove that the hip hop kids listen for, and its fussily programmed rhythm tracks and layers of synthesizers (all played by the band's singer and songwriter, Trent Reznor) sounded too contrived and mechanical for a Rock audience. The band came to New York for a special showcase performance during the 1989 New Music Seminar, and although I didn't attend (TVT Records had to hire a charter bus to shlep would-be listeners to the China Club to hear them), people came back talking about the band. Still, my friends from Cleveland didn't seem impressed; they pointed out that Reznor got his start in a Top 40 cover band called The Urge, and later played keyboards in a cheesy New Wave band called The Exotic Birds. Nine Inch Nails turned up on the cover of The Buzz out of Albany, New York in December, a bunch of weird-looking guys with funny haircuts and white pancake makeup smeared over their faces and bare chests. As the opening band for Jesus & Mary Chain's and then Peter Murphy's U.S. tours, the band played to large audiences, did a lot of interviews, and began to make a real name for itself. By this year's NMS, I was intrigued, and waggled a ticket to the band's sold out headlining show at the Rock Academy (quite a jump in just a year!). Live, the fussiness of NIN disappears, replaced by Trent Reznor's ferocious animal magnetism and energy. The crowd at the Rock Academy formed an enormous seething moshpit, which wound up swamping the stage. At the end of the encore, a girl ran past me screaming. Thinking she was hurt, I asked if I could help; tearful, she held up a black piece of cloth -- a piece of Trent's shirt, which he had shredded and thrown into the crowd! Trentmania! The first industrial noise band for teenyboppers! I was hooked, and during the headlining club tour which followed NMS, I tried unsuccessfully to interview NIN several times. The logistics never worked out, but luckily Shawn Scallen up in Canada did catch up with the enigmatic Mr. Reznor, and here's the results...

- Jim Testa

nine inch nails

This interview with Nine Inch Nail's Trent Reznor was done in Montreal, Quebec, Canada on the final day of their tour opening for Peter Murphy. Interview by Shawn Scallen and Jeff Sutherland.

How did the Peter Murphy/Nine Inch Nails thing work out?

T: This is the last day of our tour and we're happy about it, because it has actually been going quite badly. It's been okay, it's getting good, but it's been difficult. We've had some problems with Peter Murphy's crew.

Can you elaborate?

T: We've been out since January, we did Jesus & Mary Chain's tour, then we met up with Peter Murphy. To start with, we're burned out. Secondly, our shows have gotten more aggressive and violent and there's been some concern over stage equipment - whether we're going to destroy their equipment - so now we're not even allowed to do this, or we can't use these lights. Things like that. It's an ongoing battle. Somehow, we've made it to the end.

Do you feel that touring with Murphy or JAMC has given you a new audience?

T: I think we definitely have. That was the theory of being the opening act, exposing ourselves to a wider base. I'm not sure Peter Murphy's crowd is the crowd I'm trying to attract. I'd feel more comfortable with Jane's Addiction or something like that, to try to break us more into a rock market than the 14-year old girl, eyeliner, Bauhaus crowd it turned out to be. Which is not to slag Peter Murphy or his band, because they've been really great to us.

Pretty Hate Machine was a who's who of producers. How did that happen?

T: I figured with a bunch of names stuck on it, people would think, "Oh well, of course it's going to be good. You've got Adrian (Sherwood) and Flood and everyone in a room together, let's do an album, it's going to be great!" Which wasn't the case at all. The stuff was finished when we went into it. The only track which was significantly reworked was "Down In It," which Adrian mixed, because I basically said, "Adrian, I like what you do, just mix it." It was looked at as a remix. The rest of the album was pretty much the way I developed it. The truth of that will come out of upcoming albums, because it won't be a producers showcase in the future.

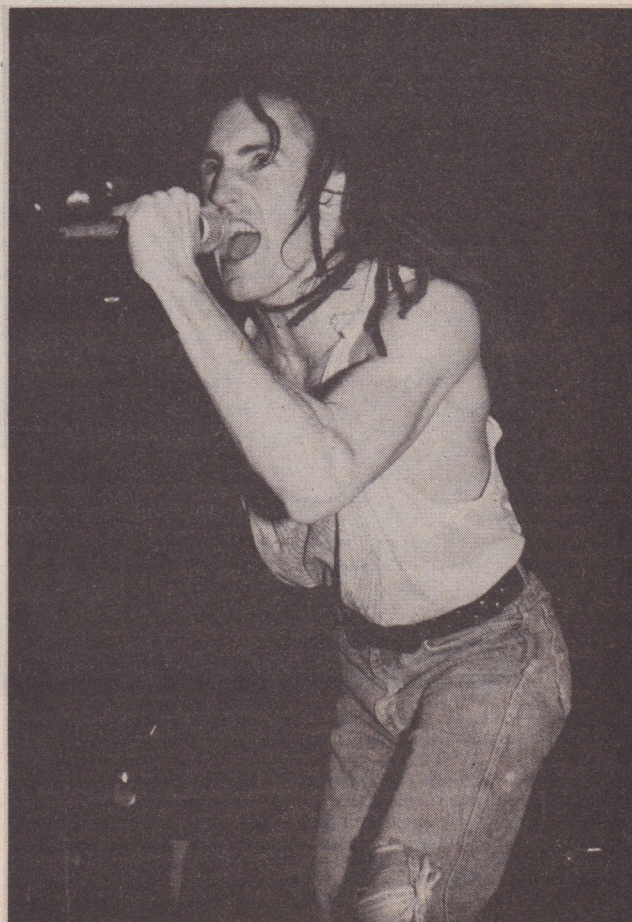
Do you think you learned anything working with these guys?

T: I definitely did. Yeah, working with all of them, none of it was in any ideal circumstances because most of it was "We have this much time and this many songs," and we'd rush through it. The people I think I could have learned the most from, like Adrian and Flood, I spent the least amount of time with. Just as far as the whole process, I've learned a bit and I've gained a lot of confidence.

On the album, it's you. It's your album. How difficult was it to translate the Nine Inch Nails experience to stage? How did you go about doing it?

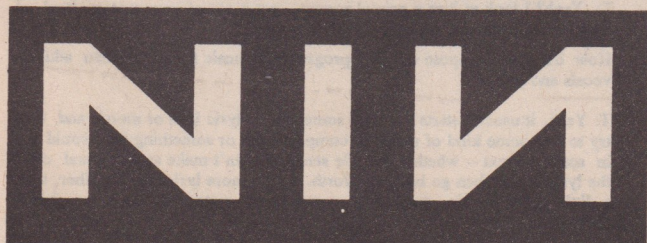
T: I finished the album in the summer of 1989. Then from summer till winter, I pretty much spent re-arranging the songs to accommodate live musicians, because I didn't want to go out alone, with a tape deck, and do an Erasure show. So I got some friends of mine from Cleveland, which is where I'm based right now, that knew where I was coming from, pretty much the same emotional state I was at. That could understand, sincerity-wise, where I was coming from. I chose them for that reason, rather than great musicianship, because the music is not about great playing, it's about more or less an attitude. So I just spent several months reworking stuff, adding more guitar, making it raw, making it a little more aggressive. It seems to have worked out alright.

All your lyrics are written from the first person. I, I, I. Most songwriters don't use the first person that much.



TRENT REZNOR

Photo by Shawn Scallen



T: These are the first songs I've written. That's how I write right now, because I'm inexperienced at it. It was basically from collections of notes I had made -- confessional moments brought on by drunkenness or whatever. I just wanted to make something that would be like records I listened to when I grew up, that I could relate to at the time, whether it was Pink Floyd's *The Wall*, which at the time was my favorite soundtrack, or a Smiths' album, or something like that. That was the basic idea behind it. It just turned out to be first person stuff.

When it's not I, I, I, there's a lot of God this and God that. Are you a religious person?

T: No, not at all. There are a few things that run throughout the record, things that were just bothering me at the time I wrote it. I had a problem with religion at the time. I didn't have it figured out.

Do you have the answers now?

T: No, I don't I've been busy, so I haven't had time to think about it as much.

Pretty Hate Machine is very dark and brooding, but it has this underlying sense of optimism, that you can hear in the synthesizers.

T: Did you read that somewhere, or did you think that?

No, I felt it.

T: 'Cause I think that I've said that somewhere too.

All I've read were interviews saying you're a dangerous man, a potential suicide case.

T: Yeah? I look at it as a primal scream - get it out of your system kind of thing. It's therapeutic for me.

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Photo by Michele Taylor



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T: Yeah? I look at it as a primal scream - get it out of your system kind of thing. It's therapeutic for me.

How do you compose a song - program the music first, and then add the vocals and guitar?

T: Yeah, it usually starts out with some sort of lyric idea or mood, and then try to find some kind of music to compliment it or something that would fit, in some context -- whether it made sense or didn't make sense -- and offset the lyrics. And then go back and forth. A few more lyrics put together, than a little more music, and then you realize the meter of the verse should change.

Then you produce it?

T: Yeah. I'm very slow at it so I don't produce a lot of the stuff. If I start something I think sucks, I just stop and go on to something else.

You're from Cleveland, what do you find good and bad about the city as a base for an industrial band?

T: Good: It's cheap to live there. I've had a lot of studio opportunities that I wouldn't have had in New York, L.A., or London. Bad: It's culturally pretty much a zero for what I do. There's a very small music scene and it's unsupportive of its bands. I've got to the point where I don't care now. Okay, I'm from Cleveland, but for a while, it was like, "Don't bring it up because I don't want to be associated with it." There are a few bands that have come out of there, but the scene is not really conducive to spawning good material. It's got a very Bruce Springsteen mentality.

On the album, you thank Clive Barker, Prince, Jane's Addiction, Public Enemy. How have they influenced or helped you?

T: In that particular part of the credits, all that stuff was sampled directly and I was kind of saying "Thanks, guys."

Like, "don't sue me."

T: Right. At the time, I wasn't sure whether I could do that or not. I just did it. Nobody's yelled yet. Perry from Jane's Addiction said, "hey, thanks, it's free publicity for us." So that's cool. As far as Clive Barker, I ripped off a lyric from a book of his one time.

Would you mind if someone sampled your records?

T: No, I think that's cool. Some people ask me about sampling. Sampling as far as looping other peoples' material or stealing music, as long as it is done creatively, is fine. If it's something like De La Soul, where your whole music bed is someone else's, maybe share the publishing to be fair. But if it's like the way I use samples, or Public Enemy, that's new music, it's using old sounds but it's different. Go ahead. It's cool.

"The music is not about great playing, it's about more or less an attitude. Okay, I'm from Cleveland, but for a while, it was like, 'Don't bring it up because I don't want to be associated with it.' There are a few bands that have come out of there, but the scene is not really conducive to spawning good material. It's got a very Bruce Springsteen mentality"

Do you get sick of your own music after pawing through it for a year?

T: Some of it. The actual live set I still enjoy everything. I'm not really sick of it. I don't listen to the album that much. I'm getting tired of that. I'm getting really sick of the production of it. I realize there are things I'd do differently now.

What will you do differently on the next album?

T: The way I work is, I have to set up a bunch of guidelines before I actually start writing songs. With Pretty Hate Machine, it was "I'm going to play all the instruments myself, and theme is going to be THIS," and start cranking out songs. On the next one, I've got a few different guidelines set up, part of which is a collaboration with Flood, who's probably going to do (produce) the next album. Lyrically and thematically, it's a bit different. So now it's a matter of kicking into gear. It probably won't sound that much like (the first lp). It'll probably still have an industrial element to it, but that's not going to be the root of our sound forever.

Where do you think you fit into the industrial dance scene, if Depeche Mode is one end of the spectrum and Test Department is the other? Where does Trent Reznor fit in?

T: The biggest influence has probably been Ministry, and Al Jourgensen for the most part. I've always been into electronic music and I like the way he's added aggression. For me, I was unfamiliar with the Test Dept. stuff that



influenced him. "Twich" came out, that Sherwood did, and I thought it was amazing. I didn't know anything like that. Then I got into Foetus and some other stuff. As far as where we fit in, I don't know, we're kind of a Top 40 Industrial band in a way. I think what makes us a bit more accessible and has sold more records is the fact that it's more song oriented, more structured like pop songs. Which is not to say it's better, it's just different than, say, Front 242, which is a groove oriented thing. I think a lot of those bands hate us. I don't know if it's because we've shown up on the charts, or they just hate us. I don't care.

What about the video, I heard that MTV forced you to edit it before they'd show it?

T: It was like, "take this one scene out and we'll play it." Okay. If I felt it really compromised the video, fine, but it didn't in my opinion. It was that much more of a reason to see the video in a club. You saw Jane's Addiction on MTV. They took out a half second of Perry's penis. What's the big deal? The song/video didn't suffer that greatly not seeing it. Die Warzau [one of the bands Trent indicated had been slugging NINE] had a shot of a guy shooting up at the end.... Totally inappropriate in the first place. "We refuse to compromise our art!" Fine, I've sold ten times more albums than you have - touche'!

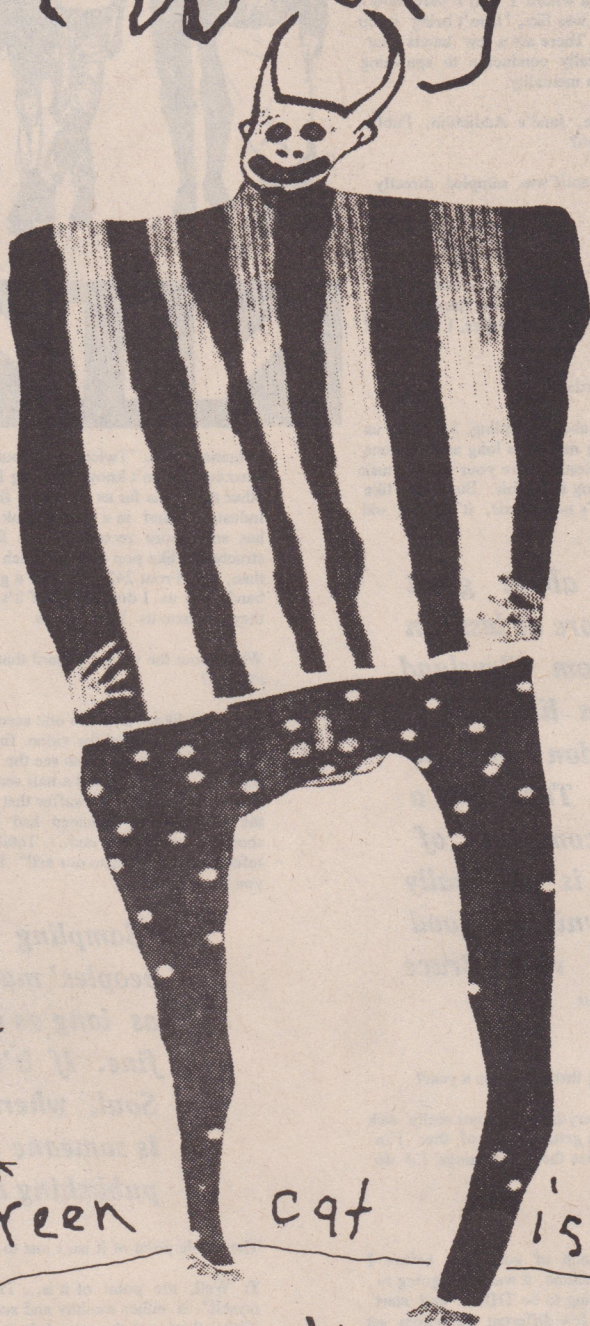
"Sampling as far as looping other peoples' material or stealing music, as long as it is done creatively, is fine. If it's something like De La Soul, where your whole music bed is someone else's, maybe share the publishing to be fair"

The whole point of it isn't just to tell a lot of albums, though, is it?

T: Well, the point of it is... The artist who says, "I just do it to please myself" is either wealthy and successful, or totally full of you know what. 'Cause that's not the case. I do it to please other people.

The best compliment is if somebody comes up to me and says, "I really like your album. I totally relate to it, man." That's the reward for me. If I wanted to do it for myself, why put an album out. I could sit at home with headphones. Yeah, I'm out to sell records. When it would be the wrong thing is when it's "Okay, I'm going to take the core of an idea and water it down so that this horrible radio format will play it." I'm not interested in doing that. So far, with our label (TVT), they didn't care if we sold 1000 or 100,000 copies. They pretty much said, "Do what you want to do." And I did what I wanted to and it's done alright, so it's been a good situation. Now if it turns into, "Next album, we want to see a Gold album and we want a Top 40 single..." If I write a song that comes out and it's a big hit -- great. But I'm not gearing to do that. I just want to do what I want to do, and if it works, cool.

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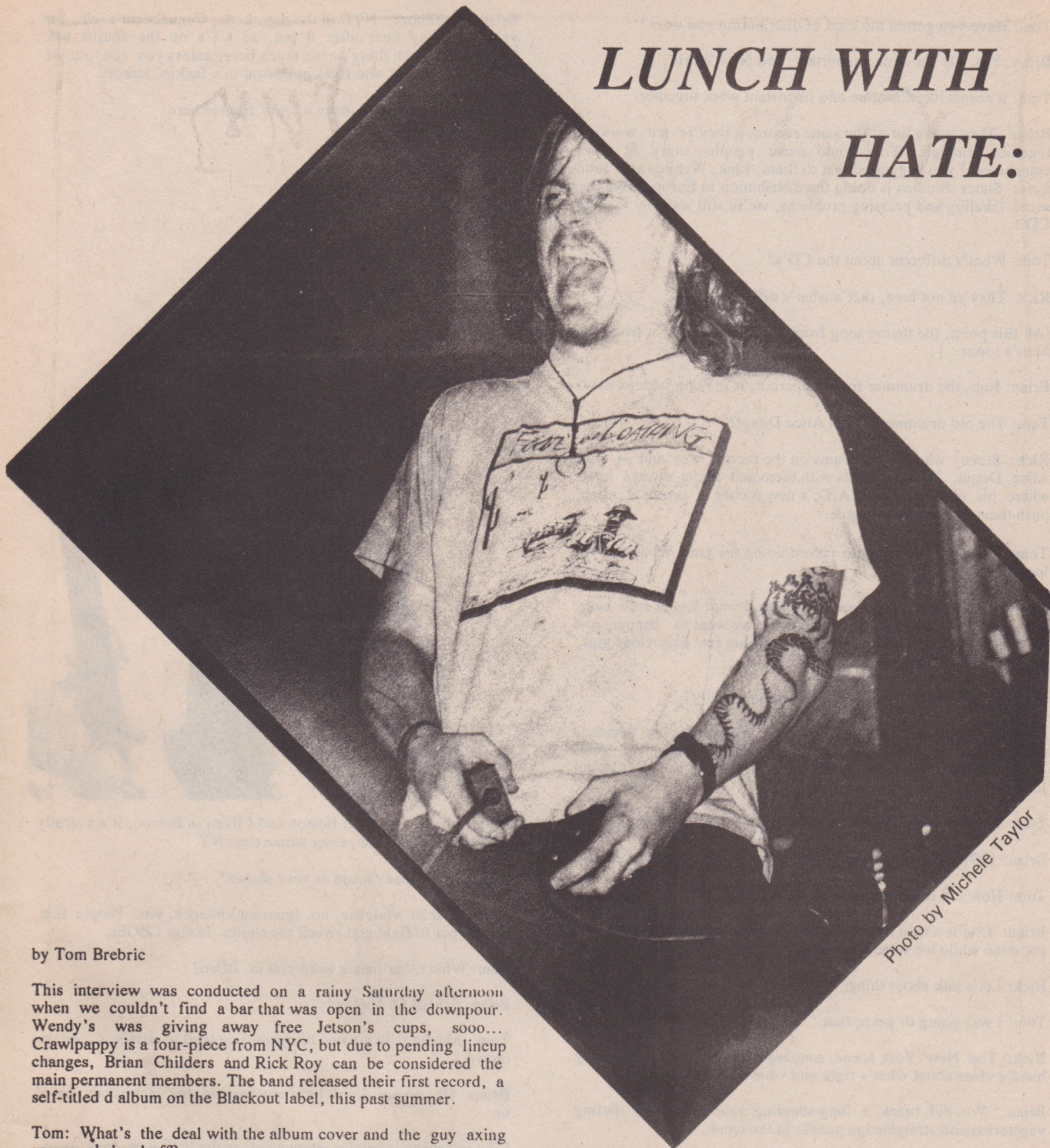


Photo by Michele Taylor

by Tom Brebric

This interview was conducted on a rainy Saturday afternoon when we couldn't find a bar that was open in the downpour. Wendy's was giving away free Jetson's cups, sooo... Crawlpappy is a four-piece from NYC, but due to pending lineup changes, Brian Childers and Rick Roy can be considered the main permanent members. The band released their first record, a self-titled d album on the Blackout label, this past summer.

Tom: What's the deal with the album cover and the guy axing someone's head off?

Brian: It's from the early 1550's, a woodprint by Albrecht Dürer, a German. He's like one of our patron saints. The picture is Cain slaying Abel. We really liked it because it's violent and because it has anti-religious overtones. I don't like religion. I think it's a big crock. Religion, the opiate and the crack of the masses.

Tom: Why the Blackout Records label?

Brian: 'Cause he's the only one who would do it. We needed to do it really fast, and Bill (Blackout Records) said, basically, here's the \$\$, let's do it. We were really tight and wanted to go in and record but we just didn't have the money.

The Crawlpappy

Interview

Tom: Have you gotten the kind of distribution you want?

Brian: Yes, via Caroline, Important, and New World.

Tom: It seems like Caroline and Important work together.

Brian: They get a lot of the same records, they're not working together, though. You could make people angry at both companies if you suggested that to them. Link, Webite, and John Loter Sutter Studios is doing the distribution in Europe. We has some labeling and pressing problems, we're still waiting for the CD's.

Tom: What's different about the CD's?

Rick: They're not here, that's what's different.

[At this point, the theme song from Twin Peaks rolls in from the Men's room...]

Brian: Rob, the drummer from Uppercut, is playing with us now.

Tom: The old drummer was in Alice Donut?

Rick: Steve, who played drums on the record, was and is with Alice Donut. We're friends with them and Steve always knew where his allegiance was. A.D.'s new record is great, it might push them into the next league.

Tom: What do you see your record doing for you? What are you looking for?

Brian: We're looking for good freebies. I want lots of free beer, free food, and free clothes, that's what we want to happen and we want to get paid a lot of money for doing real easy close gigs, and go on really cool tours.

Tom: So it's not like you'd sell out commercially?

Brian: Oh no, we're not good enough. We've already decided, the biggest we want to get is on a larger independent label. You're like on a major...Important is CBS now via Capitol Records.

Tom: When do you plan to tour?

Brian: 1991, first major tour in Europe.

Tom: How old is the material on the record?

Brian: One is as old as the band (1988) and another one we just got done while we were recording.

Rick: Let's talk about things we hate.

Tom: I was going to get to that.

Rick: The New York scene, running with the pack, following band's ideas about what's right and what clothes to wear.

Brian: We did break a long-standing rule about not letting vegetarian and straightedge people in the band.

Tom: Who's a vegetarian?

Brian: The drummer, Rob. Drummers are hard to come by, especially in New York, you gotta compromise. Oh, I hate Jello Biafra.

Rick: I don't hate him. Why do you?

Brian: 'Cause he's a preacher, I don't like being preached to. Especially by someone in punk rock.

Tom: What cities do you hate?

Brian: Baltimore, NYC in the day, L.A., Connecticut's ok, but you can't buy beer after 8 pm, so CT's on the shitlist too. There's no such thing as too much beer, unless you run out of money. Everyone who lives in Boston in a fuckin' jerkoff.

Tom: You're going to make a lot of friends here.



Brian: I have friends in Boston and I lived in Boston, it's a really racial town right now, even worse than NY.

Tom: Do you see racism at your shows?

Brian: Racial violence, no. Ignorant violence, yes. People that just go out to fight and wreck the shows, like at CBGBs.

Tom: What other bands were you in, Brian?

Brian: School Of Violence.

Tom: Maybe with a name like that, you tend to attract a certain crowd.

Brian: Oh no, we didn't have any trouble, but everybody hated us.

[The interview is briefly interrupted as the bathroom door opens and Elton John is blasted at us loudly from the p.a. The conversation shifts to drinking, a somewhat natural progression]

Brian: We wouldn't wanna cloud the issue, we're drunks.

Rick: Two or three beers and we would've given you a hell of an interview.

Brian: We have a single out now. New songs, not on the album. It's a freebie in Suburban Voice, us and Sheer Terror on the other side. They're on Blackout too. We're bumming, basically, it's me and Rick and other people sitting in with us, it's been like that the whole time.

Rick: (as the Wendy's soft rock continues) I thought I heard it all till I heard Living Colour at a restaurant like this last week. I've seen them like 20 times when I worked at CBGBs, they've finally gotten to the point where I can hate them.

Tom: Back to the hate?

Brian: Me and Bill wanna start a hate label with Sheer Terror. When you think about it, there isn't much in this world to like anymore.

Tom: Since you mentioned one of your members had been in Agnostic Front, what do you think of their "unity" concept?

Brian: There isn't any. You should have unity in your band, though. As long as the violence stays under control, then it's ok. The violence has to stop. It's fucking up everybody's lives. Violence is on the upswing.

Rick: If unity means going to support another band, it seems like a mighty high word for having friends in other bands.

Brian: Nobody knows what's going on in NY anymore. They look back to the big bad skinhead days, when Agnostic Front was around. The violence then was different. There was a reason for it, like pit violence. Now the violence is just random. I think it got distorted by kids from New Jersey, Long Island, and wherever they think it's a free for all, and they're the ones getting beaten up. Unfortunately, a lot of innocent people get beat up for no reason by people who have nothing to do with the NY scene.

Tom: You've opened for a lot of diverse bands, like Killing Joke. Is that on purpose, or just what was available?

Brian: Both.

Tom: Was it to your benefit?

Brian: It was initially. If you mean generating a crowd, no. There's very little crossover, that's not what we're about.

Rick: Everyone thinks that the NY sound is the mosh type of thing. We're not knocking it, but it's been done. There's new things happening, like Prong, Helmet, etc. There's a different sound coming out, it's going to be a merging of the noise and hardcore scenes.

Brian: If this was a photo interview, I'd chuck up my Wendy's food for you.

Tom: Is there anything you like?

Brian: We like Black Sabbath, women, our girlfriends, a lot. Mona's Bar in the East Village. We're all like married, I've been going out with my girlfriend for like 5 years.

Tom: Does being in a band bother your girlfriends?

Rick: It bothers the shit out of mine.

Brian: It doesn't bother mine. I've never tried to do anything else. I'm a fuckin' bum. I don't work regular jobs. The only I do is be in a band. After six years, I'm starting to take it seriously.

Tom: Who does your tattoos?

Brian: Mike McAbe is our guy. If he can't do it, you don't need it.

Tom: What's next for Crawlpappy?

Brian: We're playing CMJ sometime in October, and we want to get this record repressed.

Rick: We want to get fatter.

Crawlpappy

Brian: There's supposed to be 500 CD's but we still haven't seen those. I wanna kill the motherfucker who is supposed to be doing that if he doesn't hurry up.

[Rick Astley starts playing over the p.a. and gives us all a headache]

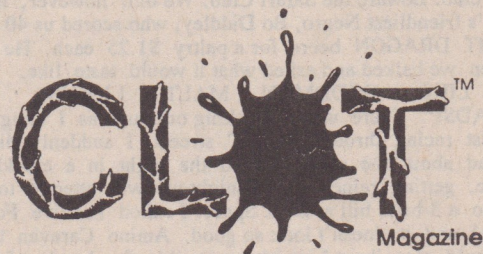
Tom: Anything else?

Brian: We won't discuss politics or religion. They suck and they're totally useless. There's no hope. If you're looking for hope, move to another planet. We want people to write us: Crawlpappy, PO Box 20049, Tompkins Square Station, New York NY 10009.

Also, I have a collection of pictures of people's extraordinary shits. If you have a picture of one that's huge or looks like a famous person, we have to collaborate. I have photos of Prong shits and Richard Kern's. I'm serious, whip out the Polaroid and send us a photo.

Tom: How can you prove the shit is from a famous person?

Brian: It's on the honor system. Some things are sacred.



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Every summer, hordes of post-teenage boys pile into dilapidated vans and head off across this great country of ours, visiting small towns, hitting up the local gentry's teenage daughters, sleeping on floors and eating enough fast food to grow pimples on a corpse. Some people would call it a vacation, others "sowing your wild oats," but to these foolhardy youth, it's that time-honored coming-of-age tradition, *The Summer Tour*. This is the story of one of those trips, as told by Brian of Erie, Pennsylvania's *The Lost*.

Oh Victory, Forget Your Underwear!

Or, Suburban Fuckwits On The Prowl

June 15 - Somewhere on I-80 in PA. Pennsylvania is a beautiful state geographically but the best thing you can say about the people is they leave it that way. This road is bumpy and I'm spilling vodka all over myself.

June 16 - ABC No Rio, NYC Gays, lesbians, \$1.50 32 oz'ers, MY THREE SCUM kicked yer goddamn butt chico! Gigundo military feminist art exhibit above club - total wild anti-coathanger fuck you guys you goddamn no good guys painting propaganda (?). Hey, we're not ALL that bad. Maybe the AG's, but not us guys. Pete and Jim argue over a can of beans, enabling the mighty Mike B. to enjoy a hearty chuckle at their expense. Allright.

June 17 - Boston, MA Very hot and sunny. Nice club, small crowd. Played with all ok bands, the highlight being Harley-quin (or something like that). Imagine a mechanic, a disco reject, an overweight metal dude, a kick-rump drag queen ("I take care of the licks, the boys take care of the chops") and an anorexic, bald, carbon copy of Rob Halford - complete with mega leather outfit, jewelry, and ATTITUDE. A load blower both visually and musically. Gary Brauns would not have come home if he had been there today.

June 18 - Washington, D.C. Staying with rich (though very hospitable) college types. Matt already cracked one with a bottle, so they're really toeing the line.

June 19 - D.C. Day off in D.C. Show last night never happened - crowd was there, bands were there, but no one showed up to open the club. Beware the Safari Club. We did, however, meet the world's friendliest Negro, Bo Diddley, who scored us 40 oz. MIDNIGHT DRAGON beers for a paltry \$1.25 each. He got upset when we balked and asked what it would taste like. "IT TASTE LIKE GODDMAN MALT LIQUOR, YA BONEHEADS!" There was no backing out, and as I chugged mine whilst racing through the D.C. streets, I suddenly didn't feel so bad about the show. Ended the night in a creekbed somewhere, getting rained on. Tonight we will attempt to be added onto a 3-band bill at D.C. Space. I called Positive Force (promoters) and it doesn't look so good. Amino Caravan they ain't. I could rant 'bout how it's impossible for bands of our stature to get on a decent D.C. bill but everyone already knows that. To fuck with bitching. And to fuck with Cynthia Connelly as well. Jim B. sleeps (no shit) 15 hours a day. Staying in this house is OK but I really miss the graffiti in rest stop poop stalls. "I want to be raped by 6 men - please reply" was the best I've seen yet (in the men's room, of course.)

June 20 - Richmond VA Some of the guys saw H.R. last night while I ate cheeseburgers. No luck at D.C. Space last night, but we met some swell folks from the bands HGUAL and AVAIL who were playing. Sold some rees ok, but really wanted to fucking play. Tonight we're playing with one of the trillion pathetic "rock" acts that all blend together and breathe my fucking air. Tried to score with their amazing assortment of groupies and made Mighty Casey look good. Fuck.



Jim B. kickin' ass in Memphis

June 22 - Myrtle Beach, SC Played a party here last night with Beef Trust and Corrupted Morals. There were 60 people there, and something tells me at least 50 were tripping. I hate it when girls trip, they walk around with their arms around each other and talk about "deep" stuff while ignoring your (or my) dudeness. Took us 13 hours to get from Richmond to here (normally a 6 hr drive) -- 2 blowouts along the way. A few hours ago we were all kicked out of Daryl's (of BAZOOKA JOE fame) new pad after a total of 1 1/2 hours sleep. Daryl & Co. party goddman hard. I felt like a bigger pussy than Truman Capote at a Cosmopolitan office party. Shared a shower with a BIG cockroach last night.

June 22 (still) Florence, SC Good show tonight. Did air-conditioning tour of Myrtle Beach earlier, then scammed motel pool for much needed fluid release.

THE LOST 1990 TOUR DIARY

June 24 - Augusta, GA Played here last night for \$10 but most of the boys "got paid" more than that. Van really fucked - we need shit before driving tomorrow. Went out for parts, got lost, and returned 5 hours later. Got the wrong parts, too.

June 25 - Augusta Got up at 6 am and got van to shop, where it's being fixed. Had a hard time eating breakfast while staring down an "ABORTION IS MURDER" billboard erected by the fine folks at Georgians For Family Values. I told Jim B. he should feel right at home here.

June 27 - Orlando, FL Oh, dese last few dayz. Played Gainesville, getting there (due to more van shit) barely in time to score a \$13 payday. Then Tampa which, as far as I could tell, was a ghost town. Beef Trust were the only band on the flyer, and after sizing up the turnout (2-3 people, all on someone's list) they graciously departed. We met a swell "guy" named Rudy who invited Matt to his van for a cocktail and to "unwind" a little bit. Right now we're doing laundry and smelling quite a bit. God Bless.

June 28 - Orlando Great night last night in O-land-oh. Woke up in the van at an incredible house that was an easy 7-figure thing. I felt like a hundred bucks. Last night was a gala festival of nudity, drunkenness, driving fast and recklessly, getting separated from one another, almost dying in car wrecks, etc. Pure Bacchanalia baby. Cops, too. I'm sure I pissed a lot of people off last night (maybe when I threw garbage on them - but fuck, I got it all over myself too) but what's life for if you can't go off once in a while? You get my point. Hats off to SPACEFISH Records for organizing one of the tour's smoothest shows. Incidentally, I'm sure nothing would've happened if the lady I selected to someday be my wife wasn't already engaged. Or maybe if I hadn't had that 7th Harvey Wallbanger. You decide.

WHO'S LOST?

Pete - Swarthy skin-basher of Lost. Conan-like in appearance and attitude.

Jim A. - Our relatively new bass player and the MOST hated man in Erie, PA.

Jim B. - His childlike innocence and baby-blues charmed a nation of babes. Oh, he plays guitar too.

Brian D. - Vocals, stargazing.

Matt - Our manager and the greatest person on earth. Often stayed up for days on end in search of the eternal ho. Noted for pushing Lost shirts on drunk redneck Texans thrice his size.

Iron Mike - Owner of the black van which carried Matt, himself, and Rich. A helluva guy in any non-shmo's book.

Rich - King of convenience stores and the Lord of Puke.

----- and guest starring...

Tyler - Sometimes a swell guy, sometimes a bastard, always a ladies' man. Guitar in Beef Trust.

Greg - Vocals, Beef Trust

Keith - Our favorite of the "beef-butt" boys due to his pleasant unassuming manner. Bass in Beef Trust.



The gang, the van, and a true folk hero - Bo Diddley



The Lost, kicking off the tour at ABC No Rio, NYC

THE LOST 1990 TOUR DIARY

July 6 - Still in Memphis. Preparing to go to Nashville for what should be one of the tour's bigger shows. Boring day, at least 325 degrees F. outside. (later) Nashville canceled, promoter (as promoters are wont to do) vanished into thin air. Going to Texas. Got caught in a BIG traffic jam and pulled over to wait it out. Someone drove by and screamed "Don't take the brown acid!" Jim and I cooked tamales on the Coleman while Iron Mike stood on his van and yelled "Yo babe, Elvis got ran over by a truck!" at the thousands of passing cars. Gruesome death causing wreck was reason for this traffic jam - made us feel good about not having auto insurance. Oh well.

July 8 - Houston, TX Trying to find a show. Bored. Went to the marketplace and admired the Mexicans, who are an admirable people.

June 29 - highway Heading back to Augusta for another show. Hot as usual, scamming motel pools as usual.

June 30 - Atlanta, GA Last night our manager cashed a major check. She was wearing a green sweater. Jim A. & I went to a house and tried to sleep through a party/Traci Lords filmfest while "the boys" went out and "partied down." They were hung over and ornery all day. (Later) Played to 3 people tonight, got \$10.50. Did a lot of arguing, screaming, etc amongst ourselves. Met a girl who wouldn't let me touch her because (get this) I "played in a thrash band that went from town to town." It takes all kinds, I guess.

July 2 - Mobile, AL Haven't played yet, but here's 3 good things that happened today: 1. Took my best shit of the tour. 2. My hair looked swell all day. 3. It finally fucking rained and the temperature dropped below 200 degrees.

July 3 - New Orleans Stayed (in Mobile) last night with a guy who had loads of good hallucinogenic stories. He says they get so many shrooms (free, of course, as nature intended it) they make spaghetti w/shroom sauce and wash it down with shroom tea. This sounded crazy to my mellow suburban ears. The guy also had a well groomed dog that masturbated for everyone in the morning. We're pretty sure Tyler taught him something when the lights were out.

July 4 - New Orleans. Waiting for the crew to show up. They opted to go "partying" again last night. Show was fine, cool club. A black man in a white Cadillac pulled up beside Jim and said "You got bumpers, boy? Huh? I say, you got bumpers?" No. "Then stay outta the road or I'll run ya over!" Heyyy, baby, it's no 4th of July.

July 5 - Memphis, TN Throat sore today, played a quick yet perky set. Matt, glib manager extraordinaire, enticed some young ladies into an evening of debauchery by stealing their car keys. Tyler tried to make him give them back, and Iron Mike retorted, "you ain't a dick or nothing, Tyler," which made Tyler so angry he walked one of the "ladies" home.



Photo by Jim Testa

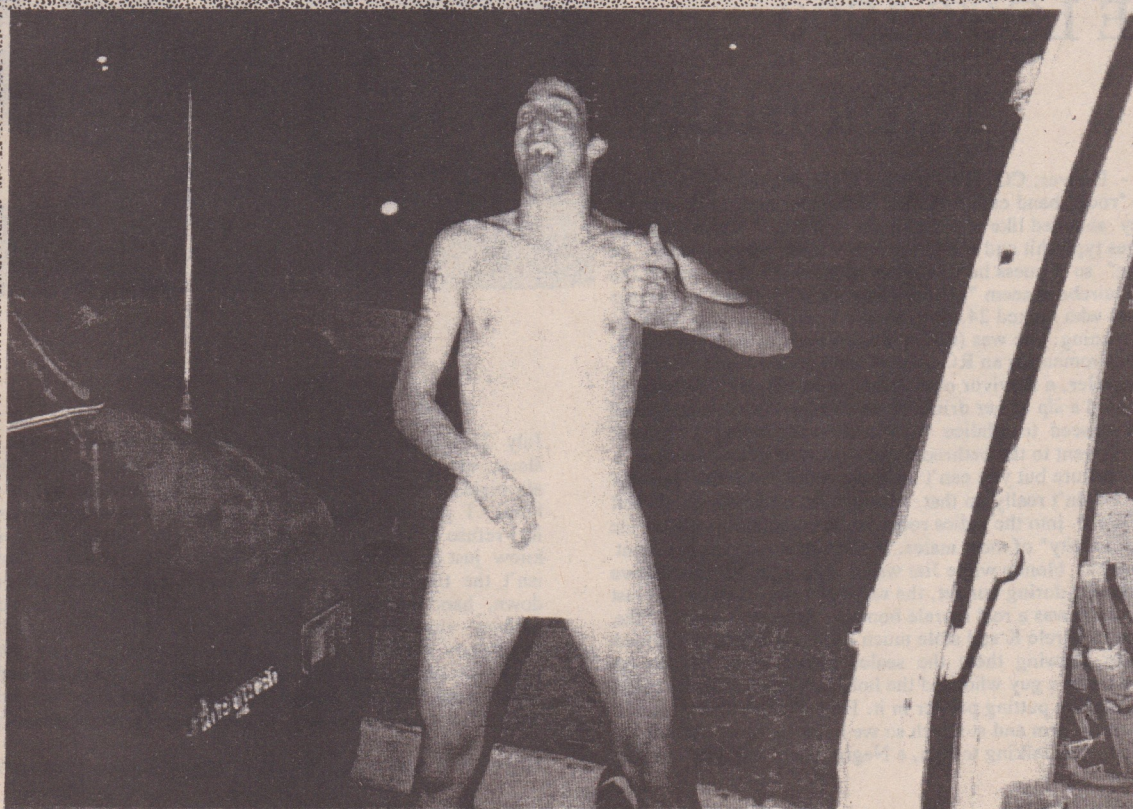
July 10 - San Antonio, TX Played here last night w/Sawhorse and Monsula. Cool show. There were girls wearing (I kid you not) just their skivvies and Matt impressed them by pulling his own underwear (I swear to God) over his shoulders. Much too broke to afford even Mil's Best - where's Bo Diddley when you need him? Nothing of large interest has occurred for a million days.

July 11 - Lubbock, TX Played for free, did our own sound - who gives a shit? Here's the cool stuff: 1. A gentleman named Roach asks us if we have a synthesizer, claiming if we do he'll "play the FUCK outta it." Then he treated us to an unaccompanied ("don't make me sing to no music!") medley of hits that ranged from "One Tin Soldier" to "Rocknroll" to "Cat Scratch Fever." His transitions and presence were incredible, and he ended his "thing" by screeching "I COULD MAKE HER PUSSY PURRRR WITH A STROKE OF MA FINGERZZZ" into the mike. Awesome. 2. I fell in love tonight.

July 12 - Lubbock, TX Played same club as last night and did much better, thank you. We've been in Lubbock 3 years now. Saw a shitload of fights - men fighting women, the cops, each other. Until now I did not know the meaning of the phrase "lungs eaten out by love." I'll be staying here forever.



Greg & Keith of Beef Trust...okay guys



Brian, feeling good about life and his place in it

July 13 - Albuquerque, NM Did a house party with STICK that turned out quite well. The wonderful lady having the show has to have at least 36 pets, even a shark! Look out!

July 14 - Boulder, Co Oh, brother. We were booked, erased, then added on with a "sensitive" art type band whose wardrobe cost more than our van. The place was a total vegan/coffeetea/literature type place which gave me the willies. They (aforementioned band) played and then refused to let us use their p.a. on the basis of "we gotta go." Not even by showing them a healthy portion of our tanned selves could we persuade them. I never did figure out why, when we left (3 hours later) their 1990 Ford pickup (with p.a.) was still in the lot. Anyway, there was one cool part in the set where they "bring it down" and the singer asks if anyone has something to say. When no one does, he distributes little pieces of paper to everyone. They read, "When someone gives you a chance to speak your mind, you should probably take it." This was all ruined, however, when people actually started saying dumb things like "Live free or die," "there is nothing so great as the human mind," and other bullshit. Gimme a break! Without the aid of a microphone, Matt screamed, "EAT MEAT! CUT DOWN TREES!" which was more of what I had in mind. So we drag out the house p.a. which was just below the Tandy level of quality and tried to play some songs. Then I woke up, ha ha ha. Made \$12 by mugging the flabjackers in the opening band. Just kidding.

July 15 - Colorado Springs, CO Great show tonight. Opened for 929. It was their last show and the fucking PACKED the place. If that wasn't enough, they played killer non-dumb hooky 3-chord PUNK ROCK that was, next to Harlequin, the best thing I'd seen/heard all tour. Bravo, 929. Unbelievable that the local-regional indies ignored them and instead put out far inferior bands - not the first time that's happened, though. Ain't life grand?

THE LOST 1990 TOUR DIARY

July 16 - Denver, CO Whatta great night. Played w/ a lousy wannabe "rock" band called Malice In Wonderland. I asked them what they sounded like and the singer told me, "Y'know, man, old Stooges type shit and stuff like that." Then they covered "Be Your Dog" so I guess he was right. Shitheads - they made the London Quireboys seem "intense and rockin'." I met a 31-year old stripper who looked 24. She thought I was 22 so you KNOW it was happening. She was (take a breath) buddies with Lita Ford, an ex-frontwoman for an RCA metal band called Night Warrior, a world traveler, a survivor of cocaine, anorexia, etc. Whatta gal - even scored a sip of her drink. Then she said "excuse me" and went and danced to Malice In Wonderland. When I finished weeping, I went to the bathroom and scrawled "You can lead a whore to culture but you can't make her think" on the condom machine. I didn't really do that. Meanwhile, a blonde bombshell dragged Jim B. into the ladies room while complaining about the "total insensitivity" of most males. In the bathroom, she got beat up by another blonde while Jim watched in a most unsentimental manner. Later, during our set, the same girl got on stage and just stood there. It was a real morale booster. After the show, "the boys" went to Circle K and stole much food and talked the stoned cashier into showing them the sealed porno rags. Not to be outdone, we met a guy who said the hole in Mike's radiator could be easily fixed by putting pepper in it. He had fresh stab wounds (no shit) on his arm and stomach so we believed him. All right. While Matt was talking to him, a Negro stole the guy's bike. Seriously.

July 18 - Minneapolis, MN Last show of the tour today. Everything went well and we finally got to meet the swell folks at our label(s). However, knowing I'll be back in Erie tomorrow ruins any chance of this being a good day. Should've just killed myself in Denver.



July 21 - Goddamsuckingerie, PA Been home 3 days. Can't sleep, eat -- drink a lot, fall asleep for 45 minutes, then back up all night. I don't like talking to or seeing anyone but if I stay home, I go insane. Several times sit down to write and can't do it, I refuse it. I have a lot of songs to write. I have the titles and I know just how they go. But if I write them, I will die. Now just isn't the time. Never in my life have I felt so jerked around, let down, hand on head depressed. I go to dial the phone and stop halfway through. Girls give me their #'s, I call, and their boyfriends answer. It doesn't even surprise me anymore. We have nice chats, actually. My future plans -- get out of here, find what I want, then kill anyone that tries to take it (or her, or them) away from me. By the way, the Minneapolis show was cool.

"If you look into my eyes - baby, then you'll see I lost my mind"
- Urge Overkill

"You braggin' or complainin'?"
- Anonymous



by Shawn Scallen

Chikara are four cool guys from Kamloops, British Columbia, Canada. They used to be called Desperate Minds, but as the desperation subsided, they changed their name and lineup. The current lineup is Scott Chikara, vox and guitar; Bruce Horlock, bass and vox; Kim Sprokett, drums and vox; and Tim Chiba, guitar and vox. I spoke to Sean, um, Scott, around 8 a.m. after getting to be around 3 a.m. after their gig the night before. [But it's taken us quite a while to get around to printing this. Not as long as it took the band to finally get their new 7" out, but quite a while nonetheless... - The Editor]

Q: Why the name change?

Scott: We figured that the music was changing, the style was changing, and it was time for a change for us. The music hasn't changed a huge amount, but to us, we've grown a lot in two years. I figured the name didn't represent the band or what we wanted to do with it anymore. I wanted a different name, one that more accurately represented what I'm into.

Q: Where did you get the name Chikara? What is the symbolism behind it?

Scott: Tim's mom gave it to us. She gave it to me, actually. It's a name that means "energy and all the power in the world." It's a Japanese word.

Q: Isn't that a little pretentious? "All the power in the world?"

Scott: You bet it is. (laughter)

Q: The name change obviously didn't come about by accident. You already had started Chikara Records. How did the label come into being and what do you have on it for sale, besides the Desperate Minds album?

Scott: We've put out another band from Vancouver called Inner Anger, one called Infinite Regression, and we're working on another band from Vancouver called Roots Roundup. We're going to try and put them out next.

Q: How does the label work? Is it just you? Is it the whole band? How do you decide what to put out?

Scott: The label is just me, basically, although my brother did put out a lot of money for our new single. To decide what bands to put out? God. Mostly, local bands, I'm not interested in dealing with a band a 100 miles away. I'm mostly interested in dealing with people I know and helping them put out a record.



Photo by Shawn Scallen

Popcore From The Great White North

You can write to Chikara at PO Box 65331, Station F, Vancouver B.C. Canada V5N 5P3. Their 3 song EP "Jesus Was A Capricorn," is \$3 postpaid (if there are any left...limited edition of 500 was pressed.)

Q: Less with the new single, but especially with the Desperate Minds record, I find there's a bit of 7 Seconds there, that's what I like to compare you guys to. Do you have a problem with that? What sort of bands do you get compared to?

Scott: I don't have a problem with that. According to what I've heard from people, it could sound like the new 7 Seconds. I haven't heard it. Usually, we get Doughboys, Husker Du, and Soul Asylum comparisons.

Q: Are those valid in your opinion?

Scott: They're valid comparisons only because I think they're great bands and I go, "Yeah, geez, yeah, if you think we sound like Soul Asylum, then hey!"

Q: You've been on tour for the past three weeks. Have you noticed any big differences from city to city, or from the States to Canada?

Scott: From city to city, yeah, compared to the last time, it's a lot different. The first time we toured out this way, it was a lot more underground. Now it seems a lot more above ground - the whole scene. There's a lot more mainstream people coming out to shows - not as many punk rock looking people. As far as I'm concerned, that's great. I'd rather get to more people.

As far as cities go, the stuff on the East Coast is a lot more pretentious and violent and bullshit. But back in Canada, everything's really cool. Canada's always been really good. People always say that when they come to Canada - "It's great, people are so much nicer up here."

Q: You have this new 7", "Jesus Was A Capricorn." A Kris Kristofferson cover. Why?

Scott: I was listening to my old Kris Kristofferson records and I ripped it off.

Q: Did you have any trouble getting the rights?

Scott: Getting the rights?? C'mon, get real. The rights? The rights? It was there. We took it.

Q: You also do a couple of covers in concert. Last night you did Neil Young's "Rocking In The Free World" and you said you've been working on another cover you haven't performed yet.

Scott: We've spent the last month and a half working on Meat Loaf's "Bat Out Of Hell" but we haven't had a chance to play it. God, the song is 11 minutes long, it's got to come at the right time because you don't want to be playing a show with an 11 minutes song at the end.

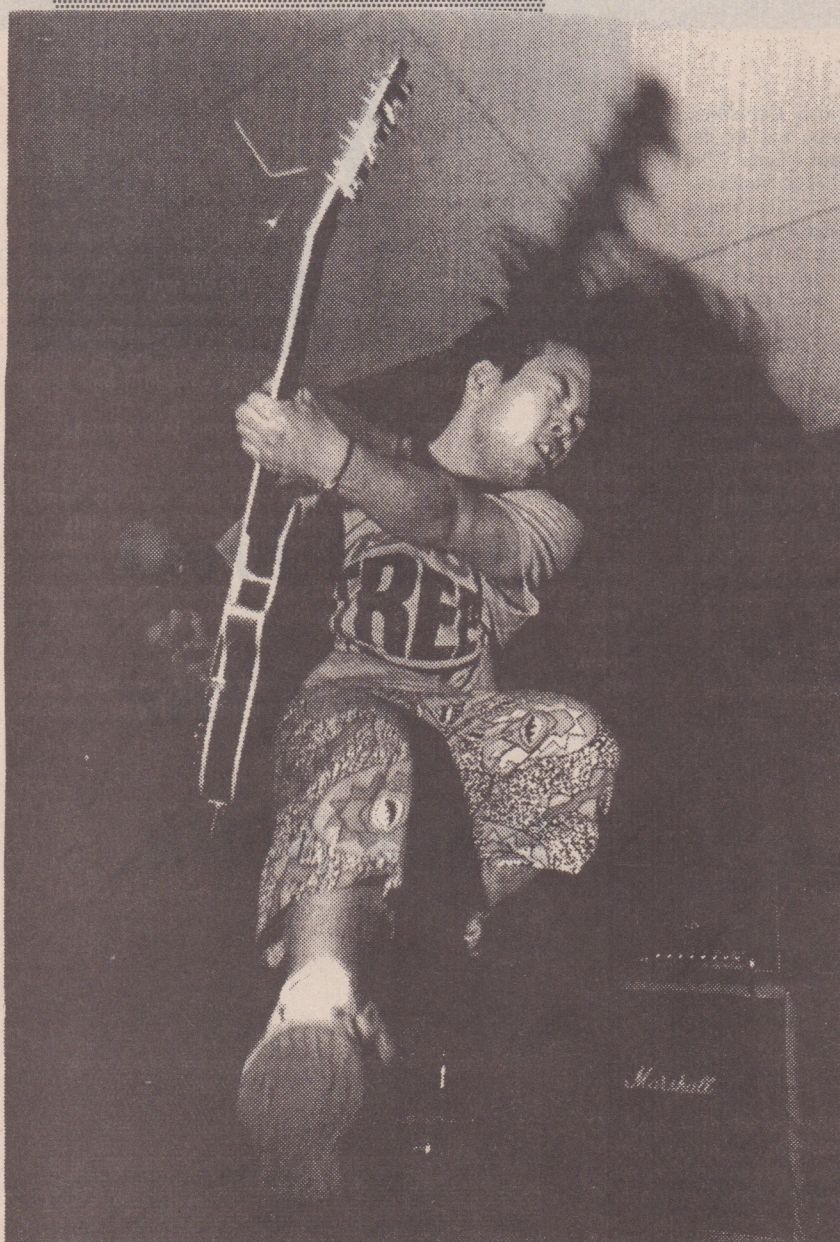


Photo by Shawn Scallen

chikara

Q: You said that when you were working at Profile (Studio), you got to meet a lot of people of high profile?

Scott: High profile people, yeah. It's great working at Profile because that's where Alternative Tentacles does their recording now. So Jello (Biafra)'s up there all the time and D.O.A.'s always working in there. Nomeansno. So we're able to talk to a lot of cool people these days.

Q: Have you done any work with Jello yet?

Scott: He's been doing a lot of work these days with D.O.A. and Nomeansno, but no Chikara collaborations right now. (laughter)

Q: I noticed last night you were walking around with a Gatorade bottle half-filled with a weird color tea.

Scott: You bet.

Q: Can you tell me what it is?

Scott: It's the best stuff. It keeps my voice in shape, except last night, we had a four day layoff and it really killed us. It's this tea called "Doctor Chang's Long Life Tea." It's the best stuff for my throat. It just loosens up all the phlegm and it really helps us out. So buy Doctor Chang's.



chikara

Q: I noticed with your songs, they're not that political, they're more on a personal level. Is that because it's easier to write about?

Scott: Nah, probably not. I could probably write songs easier that say "Fuck The World" or "What's Going On." Our songs have always been the same, but now they're a little more disguised with all kinds of pretty words. Basically, they're on a personal level because I can relate a lot better and I write about stuff that moves me. Stuff that moves me a lot more than trying to change the world.

Q: You said "disguised." Isn't that pretentious, or deceitful?

Scott: Sure it is. But it's poetic also, right? That's the way I like it. When I read good lyrics, they've always got some painting over the real meaning. That way it leaves room for interpretation. I love to hear what people think the songs are about all the time. Because most times, they're hard to figure out and I get really interesting ideas and I go, "Yeah, that's what you think it's about, hey." Just because it leaves room for people's own interpretation. The way I see it, I could go out there and preach blindly, but this way I'm preaching and trying to get minds rolling to see what other people think. But you're right, it is pretentious.

Q: You're proud of that fact?

Scott: Proud of it only because if it makes people question or wonder what it's about, then that's great. It got somebody talking about it.

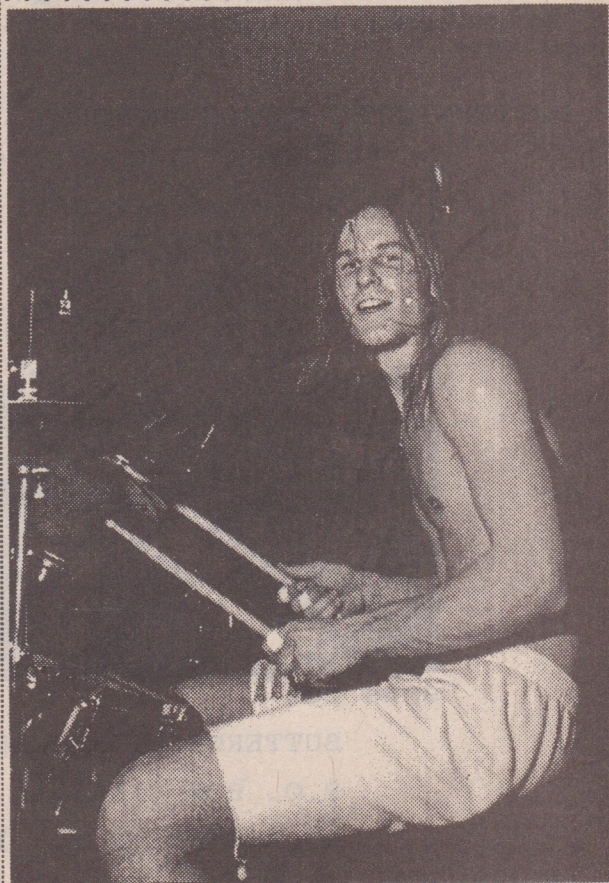


Photo by Shawn Scallen

Q: When you were unloading your van, I noticed some street hockey sticks. Have you gotten up any good games during your tour?

Scott: This has been the worst street hockey tour. Last year, we had a great time, we toured with SNFU. We played with them all the time. We found other places to play too. But this tour, no one else wanted to play. We've been playing these southern American cities where they don't even know what a hockey stick is. So we've been playing a lot of one-on-one.

Q: One more thing. On the Desperate Minds album, there are all these weird names for the band members, which aren't your real names. Is that more pretention just oozing out?

Scott: That's it. This guy, who was on tour with us once, made them up. We went to this restaurant called Zips and you give your name with your order. Instead of calling a number, they call your name. He gave everybody different names and they just stuck. We've used them ever since, even on the record. Shit, we're doing it on the new record too, the covers are done and we've all got different names on it.

Q: So you're going to change names each record?

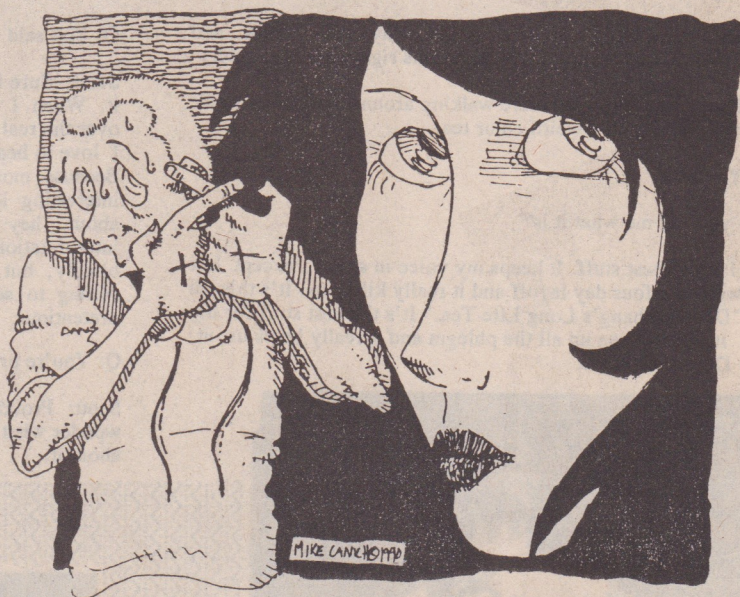
Scott: Yeah, probably.

Q: But the lineup won't change, just so people out there...

Scott: Just so people out there will think "What the hell is going on?" Because I get letters from people that say, "Geez, I'm really confused. This guy Sean wrote me, but he's not in the band, but on the record it says he wrote some of the songs. I don't know what the hell is going on."

Q: So let's get it straight. Sean is Scott.

Scott: Sean is Scott. Kim is Sylvester. Tim is Leroy. And Bruce didn't exist yet.



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BUTTERNIGHT RECORDS

Soul Side Soul Side

by Shawn Scallen



BOBBY SULLIVAN

Photo by Shawn Scallen

Soulside, in my humble opinion, is, was, and always will be one of the most original, soulful, and basically best fucking bands to come out of Washington, D.C. Well, the band is no more at this point in time, with members dispersed around the Northeastern U.S. Vocalist Bobby Sullivan has a new band going in Boston carrying on in the Soulside vein with more reggae overtones. I spoke to him while he was doing the roadie thing for Jawbox. We spoke about Soulside's breakup, their third and final album, "Hot Bodi-Gram." Bobby's new band, and the prospects for a Soulside reunion. The interview was conducted July 29, 1990. Transcribed by Craig Scallen.

Q: Let's start off with the obvious: Soulside has broken up, right?

Bobby: Yes.

Q: How did that happen? What were the reasons for the breakup?

Bobby: There's not really a reason. After every tour we ever did, we always took time off from the band to get away from it. Like going to school or whatever. We never had any long term, future plans. So basically, the last tour we did was five months ago, so it really took a lot out of us. It's just like any other break period that we've ever taken except when we practiced when we got back from the tour, it wasn't that much fun to practice. That's when it's getting stale, so we decided to stop.

Q: You guys have always been pretty heavy on touring, being on the road for months and months. Was that a personal thing, just to see how far you could drive yourselves into the dirt?

Bobby: It's fun. The thing about touring is you can live off the band while you're touring, but while you're at home, you can't. The more you tour, the less you have to work. As long as you're going different places, it's still interesting. There's periods where there's a lull but you keep going and it's fun.

Q: Your last record, Hot Bodi-Gram, was recorded on tour?

Bobby: Yeah, we finished the tour and we had three days off. Johnny was going to go on vacation in Taiwan right after the tour and he was leaving from Amsterdam, so we recorded it there. It was a studio/boarding room setup, so we stayed there five days and recorded it.

Q: How was that different from recording in the States or D.C.? The equipment, and also any sort of customs or duties?

Bobby: The main thing that was different was that it was a lot cheaper than in the U.S. The exchange rate in Holland was good, since we had made European money on our tour. Another thing that was different was that we wrote at least half the songs on that tour, so when we got to the studio, we really had to re-work a lot of stuff. We even wrote one song in the studio and one of the songs we re-wrote during the last show.

Q: A few of the songs sound sort of off the cuff. The whole album itself, not in a bad sense, doesn't sound as cohesive or directed as Trigger.

Bobby: Yeah, I think it was more, just lay back and see what happens. To me, when I hear the record, all I can think of is the tour. It's hard for me to tell what other people can get out of it. I know with Fire Party, they went through a lot of the same things we did in Europe and told me they got that out of the record too. But I wonder what other people get out of it.

Q: A lot of people I've talked to like it better than the first two albums.

Bobby: I like it better. Just because I think it's more durable. I think it will stand the test of time better than the other stuff. I think it's a lot more emotional.

Q: I remember speaking to somebody from some band, a Washington one I think, talking about traveling with merchandise, and they told me some of your border crossing techniques. One in particular, crossing into Austria, and how you tried to convince the border guard that each of you were wearing 10 t shirts because it was your stage costume. With touring through so many countries, and bringing merchandise along, what sort of problems do you run into?

Bobby: We had working papers set up for the countries so it really wasn't a problem. We've had more of a problem at the Canadian border than anywhere, even in Poland. In fact, when we got to the Polish border, we were all really nervous and we gave them our passports and they said, "Oh, the American band that's playing in that town. You're late for your soundcheck. You'd better hurry up." So we were like "Alright! see you later!" That's what Poland was like. But the U.S./Canada is like, "Shit, they're going to find the t shirts!"

Q: What sort of stuff do you, as well as other members of the band, have planned for the future? I assume you're not all going to leave it at that and put music to rest?

Bobby: Yeah, all of us are doing music right away. Right now. We always did anyway. During Soulside, there were bits of other stuff going on. Our guitar player, Scott McCloud, he was in this band Rain who have a record out on Peterbilt Records. He was in Rain during one of the breaks. There's also Girls Against Boys, which is coming out with a 7-inch. That has our guitar player, our bass player, and Eli, our soundman, doing drum machine and samples and stuff. Amy from Fire Party sings on one of the songs. It's kind of Skinny Puppy stuff, but it's really cool.

Q: Where is that coming out?

Bobby: Eli's putting that out himself, so I guess it's going to be like Peterbilt Records in a way. So everyone was always doing stuff. Right now, Johnny, Scott and Alexis are playing with Mike Fuller, who was in Happy Go Licky and Rites Of Spring. I know they're playing D.C. and Rhode Island. I think our guitar player is moving up to New York, but I'm not sure who's going with him or what.

Q: What are you doing now?

Bobby: I got a band together in Boston the last six months that I was there, when I went home this summer. I just graduated so I'm going back there in September. We're going to play out of Boston until Christmas and then hopefully go somewhere else after that. I'd like to move to the East Coast for a while. Just seeing some different plans. I think I'd like to spend a bit of time in some of those places. Hopefully we'll move somewhere, or maybe move back to D.C. I have no idea.

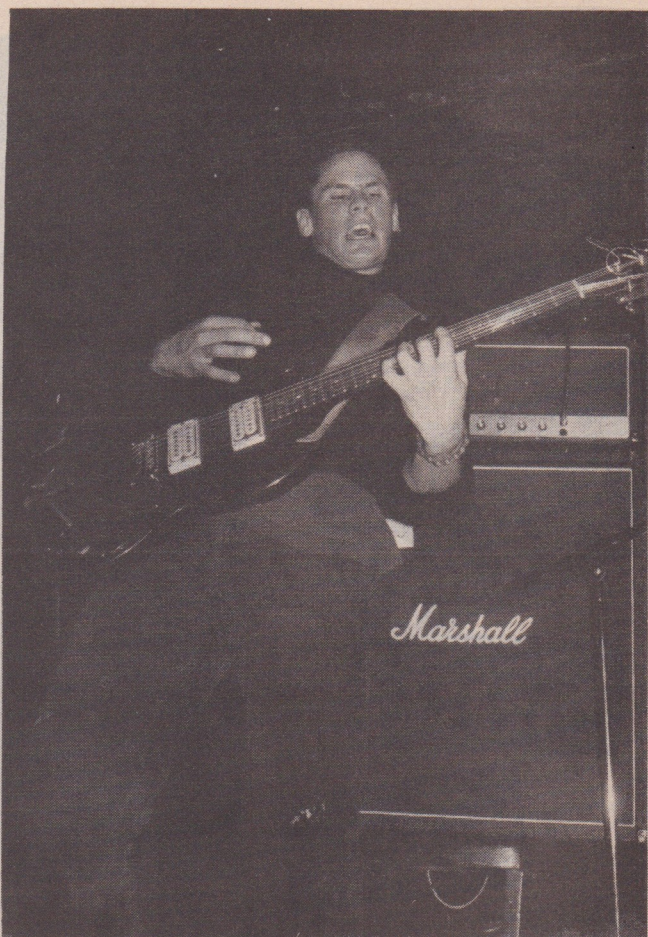
Q: What stage is the band at now?

Bobby: We played four shows so we have a full set, but nothing more. We recorded four songs, but they don't sound as good as we wanted them to. One of them is going to be on a compilation coming out of Chicago which is a benefit for the American Indians.... I want to write a full other set before we record anything more. I definitely want to do more recording during the Fall.

Q: What sort of style is the band in, and who's in it?

Bobby: The guys are Richard, Bo, and Mike. They're all from the coast of Massachusetts. One was going to art school in Boston. One I met at B.U. and another is going to some really small college in Boston. They all live in a house together so we practice at the house. Half of our set is like reggae and then the other half is kind of Soulside but more rock. Our guitar player definitely comes from a more of a rock and roll background. He's into the hard stuff.

Q: With the reggae and your dreadlocks, do you practice Rastafarianism?



SCOTT McCLOUD

Photo by Shawn Scallen

Bobby: That's something that's different for every person. To practice it, I don't know. I've done a lot of research and talked to a lot of Rastas. I have a hard time embracing any religion just because it's the way I grew up. I grew up with an Episcopalian background, and I never really took it seriously. I'm really into history. History was my concentration in school. So I started reading about Africa and stuff like that. Recently, I started reading the Bible, as a sort of literary thing, which is how the Rastas read it. So I'm starting to understand their interpretations of the Bible.

Q: What do you listen to, and how does that influence your music?

Bobby: I listen to everything. I listen to a lot of reggae, but only the real roots stuff. I always have, all through Soulside, because I worked at RAS Records, and they put out a lot of reggae stuff. They also distribute a lot of reggae, like Tuff Gong, Bob Marley's label. All that stuff would come in, the Jamaican pressings, so I got really into it. I think that influenced me in Soulside; instead of screaming, trying to sing a melody. But different things were influencing our guitar player and so on. That's how I think it should be. If there's one main influence in a band, it makes the band sound like someone else.

Q: I noticed Alexis definitely had a rap or a hip hop influence in his drumming style.

Bobby: Yeah. When we started, Chris Thompson was our original bass player, and only me and him had really ever listened to punk before and were going to punk shows. Scott and Alexis were still into Led Zeppelin and that kind of stuff, and U2, early U2. In a way, that's what's encouraging about the new band I'm in. The other guys in the band come from totally different backgrounds than were in Soulside, so I think the change will be nice. I think Soulside will still practice, jam around, or play parties. I think it would be a shame not to play again.

HAVEN'T I SEEN YOU BEFORE?

Friday the 13th has long held a stranglehold on most of our psyches, with its promises of bad luck and disaster. Those foolish enough to believe in such superstition should now give themselves a collective kick in the ass. On Friday, June 13, the evil spirits were too busy moshing at FAITH NO MORE's dazzling surprise gig at L'Amours to be running around causing torment & grief.

Opening their show with the driving rhythm of "From Out Of Nowhere," and whisking through an energized hour and forty-five minute set that concentrated on the band's marvelous REAL THING lp, FNM proved, once and for all, that they are music's one and only funk'n'metal rap gods. Reincarnating such fun-filled classics as "Introduce Yourself" and "We Care A Lot," and even covering snippets of New Kids On The Block, Madonna, and Lenny Kravitz, and of course the Nestles chocolate commercial jingle (creamy white, milky white, Nestles makes very best...), FNM slammed, dove, and bumped their bodies into everyone's heart. These guys are the Real Thing, indeed.

New York's own sludge metallers, CIRCUS OF POWER, also did their dirty work on the L'Amours stage, deluging the renowned Brooklyn club with their Lower East Side brand of heavy, with an emphasis on the heavy, metal. Their continuous barrage of thick-slabbed guitar riffs proved delightful and entertaining, but the band's appearance left something to be desired. In contrast to their gnarly look, Circus' music was incredibly clean and crisp, a surprise when considering the amount of distortion these guys had raging on the Marshalls.

THE ELECTRIC ANGELS, who, interestingly enough, failed to generate much of a buzz in Los Angeles but got signed, sealed, and delivered to Atlantic Records after only seven New York shows, opened for The London Quireboys' Studio 1 gig. If it weren't for a lack of wrinkles and age spots, you'd think these Angels spanned three decades. Their look dips into the torturous fashion pit of the 70's, their sound checks in with the 80's, but they're only starting to make a name for themselves in the 90's. You figure it out.

BRUCE DICKINSON, who took a short break from his Maiden pals recently to record a solo lp, visited some of New York's more famous clubs in support of the new record. From what I heard, "Sir" Bruce laid off the Maiden tunes, instead concentrating on his "Tattooed Millionaire" album. Now I don't want to sound highly critical, but don't you think the scores of fans who turned out at these shows - billed as "Bruce Dickinson - The Voice Of Iron Maiden" - felt slightly cheated after listening to "Lord" Bruce's nauseating cover of "All The Young Dudes" instead of Maiden classics like "The Number Of The Beast"? And isn't that false advertising?

LAW AND ORDER took over their home turn with an all acoustic set at Staten Island's Red Spot. Their performance was billed as the band's final gig before they begin recording a follow-up to last year's superb "Guilty Of Innocence" lp. Last gigs don't last too long, I guess, because the band headlined a show at L'Amours at the end of August.

Rock by craig donner hard



FAITH NO MORE

Photo by Michele Taylor

HAVEN'T I HEARD YOU BEFORE?

Why a band with a name as cool as 2 BIT THIEF and who plays some of the finest hard rockin' music around select the most ordinary of ordinary and blasé of blasé singers as its frontman, I'll never understand. Andy Andersen sounds like a cross between the crooning of Faster Pussycat and L.A. Guns, and a good cross it is not. The music screams hard-assed rock 'n roll, but the singing oozes Sunset Strip leather boy image. What a shame.

Imagine Black Sabbath styled songs sung by a high-pitched vocalist whose voice quivers with each and every word. Pretty cool, eh? TROUBLE has been around the heavy metal scene for quite some time, and are only now beginning to get recognized - not that their getting recognized all that much. File this self-titled disc under the alternative metal header and leave a note that says, "Listen between four and six times a year for maximum effect."

Playing their Southern Cally style of thrash/speed metal and winning over legions of fans, SUICIDAL TENDENCIES may just be ready to join Metallica as the most celebrated of heavy hitting metal bands. Radio will continue to keep an arms distance away from "Lights...Camera...Revolution," with its anti-establishment beliefs and continuous gushing of so-called naughty words. This, however, should have little bearing on the success of the album - good music is good music, and good music always has a pipeline to the public.

New York mosh masters ANTHRAX return from a 'state of euphoria' with "Persistence Of Time," their newest album. "Persistence" definitely stands as the key word here. After an

unbelievably successful sojourn around the country as part of MTV's Headbangers Ball tour, the band reconvened in New York with the hope of releasing a new slab of vinyl by summer. A fire in the studio burnt that hope to ashes and sent the band scurrying to buy new instruments and re-record all of the material lost in the fire - which turned out to be everything. The record should be available by the time you read this, and take it from someone who has listened to it since the dog days of August -- "Persistence" rocks harder, faster, and funkier than all its predecessors.

REST IN PIECES, a mainstay on New York's hardcore scene since 1984, serve up its first full-length offering that will unfortunately fall between the cavernous industry cracks. Not as abrasive as hardcore and not as metallic as metal, Rest In Pieces' sound is not here or there. Hardcores will find the album too polished while headbangers will find it too heavy.

While **JUDAS PRIEST** were being harassed in a Nevada court, their fans awaited a new lp, available in September, called "Painkiller." And for all those **IRON MAIDEN** fans that can't bear another moment of Bruce Dickinson's pop metal songs, don't fret. A new Iron Maiden album, "No Prayer For The Dying," hits the stores in October, and will feature new guitarist Jannick Gers. Lemmy and

MOTORHEAD will also release new vinyl in November. And last but not least, thrashers **BLITZSPEER** just inked a deal with Epic Records, and will first release a live EP recorded at the Limelight before beginning work on a full-length studio lp (the same tactic Epic used to break fellow New Yorkers **PRONG**).

WHAT IS THAT NOISE?

Seattle, Washington doesn't sound much like the breeding ground for some of metal's most unique and original acts, but that little dot on the map has become the Rock Mecca of the country. With the Seattle sound firmly lodged in the throats of all metal listeners by now, with its overbearing snail-paced fuzz guitar, mesmerizingly slow pounding drums, and screeching Robert Plant-esque vocals, the scene in the Great Northwest has blossomed beyond anyone's wildest expectations.

Soundgarden, Mudhoney, Alice In Chains, Mother Love Bone, War Babies, and Screaming Trees all typify the burgeoning Seattle scene. It may be a little hard to swallow at first, but after that, distortion is where it's at.

Local metal and hardrock bands are invited to send demos, lps, presskits, photos, t shirts and other graft to Craig Donner c/o Jersey Beat for this column.



Photo by Andy Peters

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HACESJA

Even before the fall of the Iron Curtain, punk rock found its way into countries like Poland and Hungary in much the same way it survives in the U.S. - through word of mouth, fanzines, and young bands that practice in the garage and play shows in the basement for their friends. Largely through Maximum Rock N Roll, which has somehow always been available in Eastern Europe, I'd get a lot of mail from kids in those countries who'd find my address and write urgent letters asking about their favorite bands. I'd write back and ask about punk rock in their country, and often we'd become pen pals. Here, then, is an interview of sorts with my pen pal Adam Szulc and his friend Arek Dziuba, about their band Hacesja in Poznan, Poland. Their English has a few rough edges so some of this had to be "translated" as best I could, but I think you'll agree that what's most fascinating about Poland's punk scene isn't how different it is, but how much it's like our own.

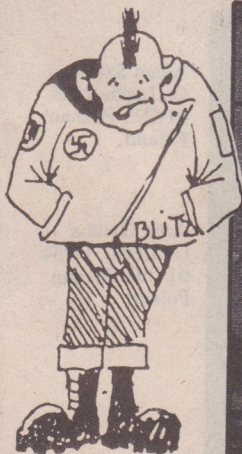
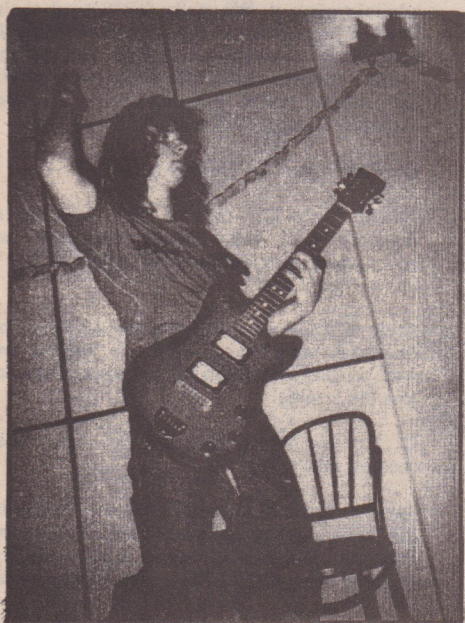
Adam: Hacesja began in January, 1990. Our lineup is Adam (me), 19, drums, I'm a hairdresser. Arek, 19, vocalist, he's going to school, and Bigos, 18, guitar, he's going to automotive school. We play without a bass because there aren't any good bassists in our area.



Q: How would you describe the band's sound?

Adam: It's very difficult to describe the sound of Hacesja, but I'll try. Me and Arek are straight edgers, but we don't play typical straight edge music like New York's bands. Because we have rehearsals in a garage, we cannot make a really good sound here. We'll change it, sure, but the music will still have the same style. I think it's a crossover between English music like Satanic Malfunctions and American core style like Infest, with Polish lyrics. It's all part of the same thing! We play an Infest cover from their 12", "Slave." On the whole, we play many very fast tracks, but also some slow ones.

Arek: I think describing our sound is without purpose. If you want to get to know our sound, you just will have to hear us. We listen to all kinds of hardcore and I think a lot of bands have influenced us. It is hard to name our music, and sometimes it's very funny too; for example, when we say we play "ultra hyper noisecore." I think we play "something"-core but naming it is really not important.



How hard has it been for you to hear hardcore from different countries?

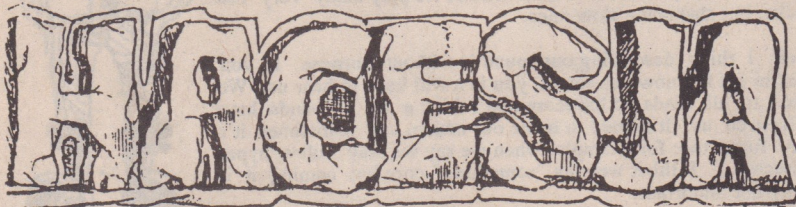
Adam: Some years ago, it was really difficult to hear foreign music, especially English and American. In Poland, there were two radio shows. The first was very stupid. This man called Marek Wiernik gave people music like GBH, Exploited, Sex Pistols, UK Subs. The second show was better but lasted only ten minutes every Monday. The dj was called Tomek Rylko, and he'd have on his program mostly unknown bands like Mob 47, Sticky, Protes Bengt, Insanity Defense, MDC, etc. He'd also have many bands from different countries - Peru, Brazil, Argentina, South Africa, Japan. Now there is a better hardcore/punk situation in Poland. People correspond with many guys all over the world and it's not difficult to hear U.S. or U.K. music. Guys in Poland listen to very different stuff. Some kids listen to only straight edge and American hardcore, others listen to punk rock music, others grindcore, and noise, and some like ultrafast core like us.

Arek: It was difficult some years ago but not the situation is quite good. We and a lot of our friends correspond with people from other countries. We exchange records, tapes, zines, etc. so it is easier to hear good American and English bands.

Q: Explain how you feel about being straight edge.

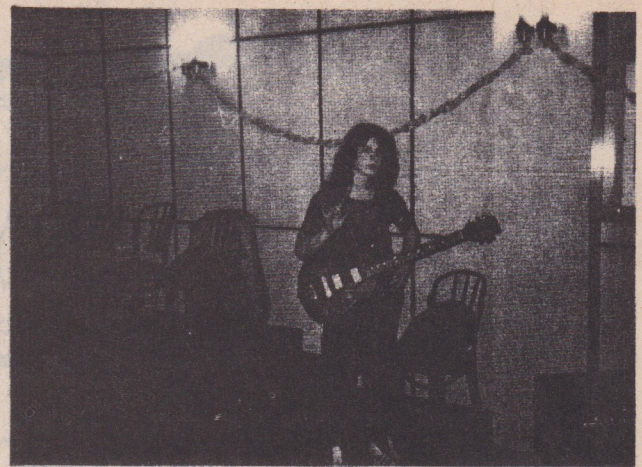
Adam: It's good that you ask this. I'm a straight edger and for me it means - don't drink, don't smoke, don't do drugs, and don't fuck. I'm not a typical S.E. because I don't dress in the S.E. style. I like S.E. music very much - Y.O.T., Gorilla Biscuits, Insted, but my favorite bands in this kind of music are Infest, Sticky, No Comment, and Crippled Youth (Bold). Why don't I drink? I think it's not so good when people drink for fun and nausea! Besides, if they don't know what they are doing, they destroy themselves. Only when you are not drunk can you have a good time at gigs, fight against nazis and the government (if you want to). I don't smoke not because I'm straight edge. For me, smoking only gives off a bad stench. I don't want to do drugs because I see what people on drugs are doing. They behave like they're drunk or worse. They kill themselves - nonsense. The world is not so bad that I don't want to remember it.

Arek: Straight edge is my way of life. I think that man shouldn't kill himself with drugs, alcohol and cigarettes. If people believe only in drinking, drugging, sex, and smoking, it's because they are thoughtless and primitive.



Adam Szulc
Os.Lecha 20/6
61-293 Poznan
Poland

Arek Dziuba
Os.Lecha 17/54
61-293 Poznan
Poland



Q: Has the change in Poland's government brought about positive changes in the punk scene for you guys?

Arek: I think political changes haven't changed the situation in music (especially in hc). In Polish shops, you can buy only Polish records and only a few pop records from other countries. It's impossible to release a good hc record on a Polish label. You can hire a studio and release your music, but you can only release records abroad. Polish labels will only release the best known groups, they are only interested in big profits.

Q: Has the fall of Communism been a major part of Polish hardcore, in terms of lyrics and motivating bands to speak out?

Arek: I think the recent political changes haven't been reflected in our music. I'm rather not interested in politics. Politics are needed for the national economy, for administering it. We really don't need their ideas of organizing society. Everyone should have their own system of moral and ethical values; everyone should CARE about himself and about other people. Other people shouldn't be aggressive. It will be enough.

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Q: What's next for Hacesja?

Adam: We'd like to do a flexi disc for a Japanese label. We'd like to record our first demo, play gigs, find a good bassist. I don't know what's next...

Arek: I hope we will find a good place for rehearsals and make good music. Maybe we will release something (if we're not made to join the army!)

Q: Do you have a message for Americans reading this?

Adam: You are so lucky! You are living in the USA and buying Jersey Beat. If you are interested in the Polish scene, music, trading records or tapes, stuff like that, please write us!

They Got It

by Jim DeRogatis

YO LA TENGO

Fakebook, lp

Bar None

The dog days of summer, 95 degrees in the shade, and I'm 1200 miles from most of my closest friends. Unemployed, with things looking a lot bleaker than I'd thought they would (and isn't that always the case?) I've eaten nothing but spaghetti for a week, can't afford a six pack even, and yeah, I'm feeling pretty sorry for myself, and I'm feeling guilty that I'm feeling sorry for myself because, after all, I didn't HAVE to move out here to Minneapolis. I don't want to admit it, but hell, yes, I am a bit lonely.

And then Fakebook arrives, and I don't think there's ever been a more welcomed package from home.

Yo La Tengo is like the close friend you call when the black clouds are gathering. You need that familiar voice to tell you everything's gonna be alright, though you know what'll be said before you even dial the number. Fakebook is their best record yet because it's the most effortless, the most conversational. Five originals and 11 tasteful covers tossed off during one long afternoon in the studio. No amps, no overdubs, no pretensions.

The tremendous, looping "Barnaby, Hardly Working" on last year's *President* proved once and for all that Ira Kaplan and Georgia Hubley can write a song that's not only as good as but actually overshadows the ones borrowed from their heroes. In Hobokenese, it proved they wuz a contendah, and it silenced the Village Voice-schooled critics who dismissed them as just more smart whiteboy college rock twaddle. "Barnaby" appears again here in a skeletal version that's no less effective. *President* was the roar so powerful and relentless that you couldn't help but take notice; Fakebook is the mysterious whisper, a lot quieter but no easier to ignore.

I've followed Yo La Tengo for six years now, since their initial summer-long work-out-the-bugs residency at Maxwells. If someone told me then that one of their records would be the thing I played more than anything else in 1990, I probably would have laughed. Georgia and Ira would've chuckled too; I don't think they ever banked on being around this long or coming this far. Hell, it took Ira three or four years just to sing into the mike. Now he's standing on stage with nothing but an acoustic guitar, harmonizing (!) with Georgia on songs as beautiful and fragile as "Speeding Motorcycle" and "Andalucia."

I can't say if Fakebook will stand up through time like the other quietly powerful records I'm tempted to compare it to. But I can say right now, Yo La Tengo has made an album that makes me feel a little bit less alone whenever I hear it. And that's a lot to say about any record.



Local Bands

ADRENALIN O.D.

Ishtar, CD
Restless

After almost 10 years of bumming around the NJ hardcore circuit on Buy Our Records, A.O.D. finally get to grab for the gold ring with this bigger-label debut on Restless. And, if you read our interview with the boys in our last issue, you know they've "divorced" the hardcore scene (and vice versa). Which leaves them...where? A punk band in an era when punk is generally conceded to be dead, I guess...which may be why producer Andy Shernoff decided to transport the band back to an era when Punk was just about to be reborn - the early 1970's. "Ishtar" isn't a punk rock album - "punk" in the sense of the 1976 CBGB-spawned punk scene, anyway. It's pre-punk. The sound here hails from an era of offbeat and marginal bands who managed to infiltrate the mainstream with one-off hit singles and novelties. I'm talking bands like Sparks, Cheap Trick, and early Kiss, with their goofy lyrics, speedy but clean guitar sound, throttling percussion (replete with an ever-present cowbell), and zany vocals. That's where Adrenalin O.D. is now, writing nutty songs about one another ("Paul A Roid" and "Dave A Roid" each describe a member of the band, and coincidentally are two of the best tunes on the album), or facetiously exploding the myth of their own stardom ("All Right Tokyo"). Paul Richard seems to be singing every song one key above his range, while Dave Scott's drumming - and that corny cowbell - anchor every song with a solid 4/4 beat. The lyrics stick to tried & true material - themselves, their dopey friends ("Joe From Lodi"), being broke, being horny, and kicking the bucket ("What A Way To Go," my personal fave). So is this gonna be a hit?

Well, they did name the thing "Ishtar," didn't they?
- Jim T.

BALZAC FROWNING

"Happy Mind" 7" EP
Fishfur

This record looked so promising... until I dropped the needle down and heard it. The vocals are like bad impressions of the B-52's Cindy and Kate. The material is less than what it could be, kinda like they stole the songs from the kids who won the talent show in high school. Maybe with a little more practice, they'll get better. For now, I'll pass.

- Jodi S.

RICHARD BARONE

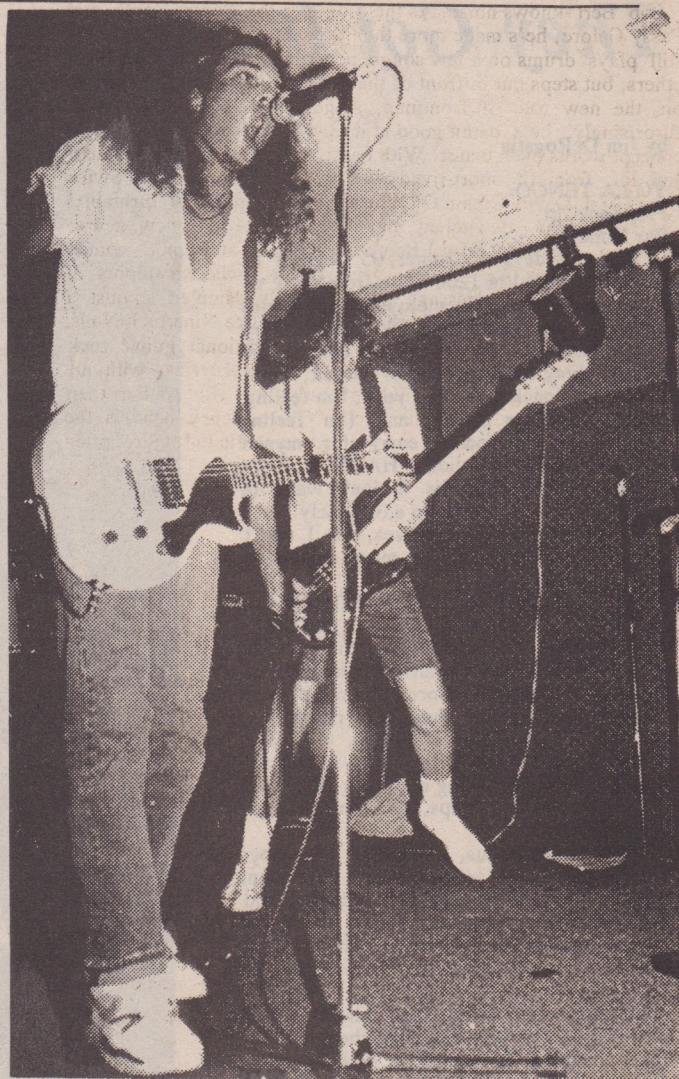
Primal Dream, lp
Paradox/MCA

A long time ago, Richard Barone wrote one of the best pop songs ever about sex (and that's saying a helluva lot, since what pop song ISN'T about deep down really about sex?). It was called "Glow In The Dark" and it was the Bongos' first Fetish single. The song's entire lyric was this: "Flash lights when ready, that's what she said to me/Some assembly required, that's what I said to her/Oh, we're gonna glow in the dark."

It may not be much to look at, but those two and a half minutes of vinyl spoke volumes. Every note Barone sang in that fragile, ringing voice of his and every chiming riff he played on his Rickenbacker guitar added a new layer of mystery, wonder and drama, and that's what made the Bongos so great.

Unfortunately, most people lack the patience, the smarts, and the desire to enjoy unraveling a mystery, and the pop world Barone has been trying so long to crack is notorious for wanting things sweet, simple, and blatant. Stooping to meet that lowest common denominator resulted in the regrettable Beat Hotel lp, which is sadly the last thing we'll ever hear from the band that made Hoboken famous.

Barone tried to recover by getting back to his roots on the enjoyable Cool Blue Halo solo effort, paying homage to his personal Holy Trinity of Bowie, Beatles, and Bolan in well-



chosen covers, and playing live with a stripped-down combo that, because of former Tiny Lights cellist Jane Scarpantoni, was pegged "chamber rock." (I think he was really aping T Rex.) Recharged, he re-entered the studio armed with a new record deal, not one but TWO hip producers (Don Dixon and Richard Gottehrer, who'd done a decent job with "Numbers With Wings"), and a credentials band that included Jay Dee Daugherty and Ivan Julian.

The results are mixed. "Where The Truth Lies," "Before You Were Born," and "Roman Circus" are solid efforts, full of the Bongos' infectious enthusiasm.

But Barone adds nothing but an out of place screech to the Velvet's "I'll Be Your Mirror" and the other originals are marred by boring hooks, busy instrumentation, or lyrics that are just too obvious. Fans will miss the obfuscated imagery that was the strong point of Barone at his best.

Also gone is the naive enthusiasm that was so hard to resist in the Florida kid who was so bravely strumming love songs on his guitar at CBGB's in the heart of the menacing urban Congo - it's been replaced by a jaded craftsmanship born of several brutal battles with the ugly beast called The Music Business. But for all that, I still can't fault the guy. There's still a touch of that old magic, and I'd much rather hear anything from this record than the latest Paula Abdul.

- Jim DeRogatis

BEWITCHED

Brain Eraser, CD

No. 6, 611 Broadway #311, New York, NY 10012

Bob Bert knows noise. As the drummer for Sonic Youth and Pussy Galore, he's made more than his share. In Bewitched, Bob still plays drums on a few songs, programs a drum machine for others, but steps out in front of the mike for the most part, taking on the new role of frontman, singer, and songwriter. Not surprisingly, he's damn good at it, and in the studio, the whole concept works even better. With bassist Chris Ward and guitarist Jim Fu, from the short-lived but very hot noise combo Swine Dive, and Dave "Cream Of Wheat" P. manipulating turntables and tape loops, Bewitched may be the first of a new genre: Hoboken Industrial Pop. Bert's wry sense of humor comes through on tunes like "I Dunno What To Do," where a snippet of answering machine message gets endlessly sampled against a crescendo of industrial-strength noise-rock. Like Nine Inch Nails, Bewitched combines all the strengths of traditional guitar rock bands - guitar, drums, strong vocals, meaningful lyrics - with all the avant-noise goodies of industrial hip hop. But rather than wallowing in angst and anger like NIN, Bewitched handles the material playfully, sometimes loud and emphatic but more often with a cheeky animated energy.

- Jim T.

THE BLISTERS

Off My Back, lp
Albertine

NJ's veteran pop-rockers finally get a record out, and it's about what you'd expect -- lotsa fast catchy tunes. The band used a lot of older material, so the Ramones/Descendants influence is probably a little stronger than it should be for a band that's this seasoned. I'd say more but their label only sent me a cassette and it's so hard to write a good review from a cassette...

- Jim T.

CRAWLPAPPY

Crawlappy, 12" EP
Blackout

"I don't like many/including you/keep your hands off me/and I'll keep mine off you." Well, those lyrics give you the idea behind this record. The band's roster includes or has included members of Alice Donut, Agnostic Front, and Bomb. This stuff is heavy and slower; I'd compare it to a less explosive Henry Rollins Band. Definitely not music to brighten up a day with, but great for when you're in that pissed off mood.

- Tom B.

DEEE-LITE

"Groove In The Heart," 3-song CD
Elektra

The acid-drenched Peter Max-style cover is way cool, but the three tunes within are so cool you could keep a slab of meat fresh with them for months. Deee-Lite are a local trio that's been an underground fave for some time, and their first foray into the hallowed halls of mainstream-dom is a surefire hit. It's a holographic, hallucinogenic 3-D hip-house hipshaking experience. Hey, wait a minute, I'm talking about DANCE MUSIC here, fer chrissakes! Disco in the pages of Jersey Beat, the tri-state area's premier punkzine? Yeah, so what? They're local and they rule. These grooves I do deeply dig. Nuff said. Instantly memorable and deee-lightfully infectious, "Groove..." is built on a retro bassline, constructed of cartoon space noises, hip hop beats, and a few horns. The crowning glory is the honey-sweet vocals of Lady Kier, with a few rapped interjections by her bandmates. Countless British bands have tried to do this for years and fell short. Y'all knew Noo Yawk rules. Take this groove into your heart. As John Lisa might say (if he were a homeboy), Dig.

- Jodi S.

THE MUTTNIKS

Execution Man, 6-song CD
PO Box 1355, NY NY 10011

Dweebish new-wave pop with irritatingly nasai vocals. Nothing here I'd ever care to hear again. Sorry.

- Debi R.

LOVE CAMP 7

Love Camp 7, EP

Bowlmor, 206 E. 9th St #1, New York NY 10003

If I've heard this record once, I've heard it... oh, I don't know, a skadillion times maybe? Jangle jangle jangle, chime chime chime. And having the good sense to worship at the feet of the dB's and Minutemen does not mean squat when you've got nothing to back it up with. What's that? I'm sorry. (ahem) "No, I do not like this record very much, thank you."

- Sal C.

PHANTOM TOLLBOOTH

Daylight In The Quiet Zone, 6 song EP
Homestead

There are two issues here. Let's talk about marketing first. Phantom Tollbooth broke up a few years ago. This posthumous recording consists of 6 tracks, recorded live at CBGB in April, 1988. Okay, fine, nothing wrong with that. Except that nowhere on the record does it say that this is a live recording, or that the material is two years old, or that it's only a 6 song EP. It looks just like a brand new studio lp. Caveat emptor.

The second issue is music, and here, once you know what you're getting, I can honestly recommend this even with the limited production values of a "live" club recording, and even if it is only 6 songs worth. Phantom Tollbooth were clearly the finest of the Sonic Youth-inspired "noise" bands to emerge on the Lower East Side in the late '80's, and there's enough mind-blowing pigfuck guitar jamming here to fuse every synapse in your brain and get your cat pregnant to boot. These recordings also prove how Dave Rick has been criminally wasting his immense talents playing bass and goofing around in those Shimmydisc sludge bands lately. Hey, Ken, how 'bout a sticker on this disc saying "6 songs recorded live in 1988?" Then you can add that it's the best thing to come out on Homestead all year.

- Jim T.

RAILROAD JERK

Railroad Jerk, CD
Matador

The first New York band to emerge on Matador Records isn't the sort of thing you'd play at 3 a.m. to break your lease, which shouldn't come as that big a surprise (it was released in tandem with the poppy Scottish Teenage Fan Club). Railroad Jerk do play the same Lower East Side "noise band" circuit as Cop Shoot Cop and Helmet, but their sound is a lot quieter and more succinct - a bluesy influence predominates, along with tasty but restrained guitar and vocals. Marcellus Hall sings like a sedated Jeffrey Lee Pierce; when he adds his soulful harmonica parts to songs, you could almost believe the Lower East Side runs along the Mississippi instead of the East River. An engrossing and engaging album, surprisingly likable and not the least bit confrontational.

- Jim T.

THE SIX AND VIOLENCE

Lettuce Prey, lp
Fist, 131 Ayers Ct., #1A, Teaneck NJ 07666

"Death To Guidos," "I've Got A Bomb," and "College Life" are all tunes that straddle the line between offensive and funny. Nice blend of electric and acoustic kazoo with a hardcore sound. Pauses of what sounded like bits from Monty Python. Fist Records hails from Teaneck and this was produced by "The Fink," the dj from WFDU. I'll finish this with my friend Dollar Bill's comments: "Even if the music sucks, the songs are funny." Not to be taken seriously.

- Tom B.

SODA CAN

Powertool, lp
Forefront, 280 Fairmount Ave, Chatham NJ 07928

This Jersey trio does the nuevo-funk thang like about a million other new bands on the scene, but miraculously, their influences extend a little deeper than a few Red Hot Chili Peppers videos and a couple of recycled Fishbone riffs. These guys use

funk contextually, changing around the basic 3-chord wah-wah riffs with fillips of surf rock, country-western, and new wave. Cool stuff, and with a lighter than usual touch, Soda Can's cheery pop tunes will dance around in your head long after "Powertool" has left your stereo.

- Jim T.

TOKEN ENTRY

Weight Of The World, lp
Emergo

While the players are all musically tight and they do the Southern California style melodic punk thing well, it's not my bag. But a friend of mine heard this and liked it, so go figure. They sound like a more metally Big Drill Car with some funk and without all the pop thrown in. All in all, a very solid release by this NY band that's been around for quite a few years but has re-emerged with this new sound.

- Jamie T.

TRIXTER

Trixter, lp
Mechanic/MCA

Take four Jersey teens weaned on Jersey's finest - Bon Jovi - and put them in a Jersey recording studio, give 'em some of that famous "Jersey is Heaven spelled with different letters" attitude, and - poof! - you got yourself Trixter. Overflowing with more sweet-sounding hooks than there are smoke stacks puffing away along the NJ Turnpike, these guys - as much as I hate to admit it - got me brushing up on my air guitar and air drumming.

- Craig D.

DANZIG

Danzig II- Lucifuge, lp
Def American

Like all great carny hucksters, Glenn Danzig's got a spiel that'll grab you by the seat of your pants and not let go until he's shaken every piece of loose change out of your pockets. Yeah, right, he's the Spawn of Hell, but also (as the neo-rockabilly of "I'm The One" suggests) the reincarnation of Elvis. Actually, he's a talented rock 'n roll singer who, with this album, turns out some very hummable bluesy hard rock. Just remember that this shtick comes from the same guy who wrote "Mommy Is A Martian" and who's about as demonic as Abbott & Costello Meet Frankenstein. Bang your head, hum along to the chorus, and buy the CD, it's got this funny lyric insert shaped like an inverted cross (what a kiddler!). The only "7" this guy worships is the seven figures he wants to see the next time he looks at his bank book.

- Jim T.

WRECK

Soul Train, CD
Playitagainsam/WaxTrax

This trio (with an occasional second guitar) belongs to the new generation of rock bands described perfectly by Brian Childers in the Crawlappy interview in this issue: a cross between the hardcore scene and noise bands. The tempos and rhythm section clearly show a hardcore influence (as well as a passion of the aggressive, in-your-face style of Big Black) while the vocals and guitars charge at you full bore with the throttling intensity and emotion of Fugazi. There's also a clangorous din this band throws up that reminds me of NY's Cop Shoot Cop. Steve Albini's production does a good job of capturing this

music's inherent fury - it sounds emphatic and angry even if you don't crank the volume - and I'm looking forward to catching the band live.

- Jim T.

COMPILATIONS

BEAT THIS: Brooklyn Beat Compilation II

20-song CD

335 Prospect Ave, Brooklyn NY 11215

With 20 bands, each - one assumes - contributing one of their best songs, you'd think this second Brooklyn Beat compilation might manage more than three or four listenable tracks. Maybe if you live in Brooklyn, hang out at Lauterbach's, and don't listen to a lot of music outside of old Rolling Stone and Blondie records, you'd actually like all of this. Then again, if you had that sort of stunted taste, you probably wouldn't review records for a hobby, would you? Give me The Fields, So It Goes, and Medicine Sunday, and send the rest of these shmoe back to Canarsie on the next L Train.

- Jim T.

Video

CROCODILE SHOP

Live - NYC Limelight August 8 1990

% Michael Hale, 131 W Passaic St, Maywood NJ 07607

Jersey Beat's "Industrial Hop" columnist Michael Hale takes center stage in this video of his band Crocodile Shop's New York debut. Captured on camcorder at the Limelight, the grainy visuals provide a surveillance-camera eye's view of the proceedings, which include smoke machines, male go go dancers, a dj scratching records midstage, Croc Shop's newest industrial, Ministry-styled songbook, and Bob Strete's silliest haircut ever (he looks like one of the Sisters Of Mercy on Ecstasy). If you were ever a fan of Hale (nee' Mick London) and Strete when they called themselves Mod Fun, you won't believe what goes on in this video. Hey, I was there and I still don't believe it.

FAITH NO MORE

You Fat Bastards - Live At the Brixton Academy, London
Reprise Video

About a year ago, I wrote a column in this zine predicting that "alternative metal" would be the new fad to rage across the country. Given the mindblowing (if long coming) success of Faith No More, looks like I was right. "Alternative Metal" pretty much sums it up, with the band's very punk-rock look, Mike Patton's grungy, slightly weird vocal style, and the thrashy guitar sounds. If the band ever stops touring long enough, they might actually release another album, but until then, this video does an excellent job of capturing the energy and earthy appeal of this hard-working band.

MINISTRY

In Case You Didn't Feel Like Showing Up (Live)

Reprise Video

Unlike the Faith No More video, which is pure concert footage, Ministry's new release jumps between shots of the band in concert from the '89-'90 tour (in both color and hi-contrast black and white) and the sort of shock-tactic visuals you'd expect from That Al Guy. Lots of cool shots of the crowd moshing and careening off that 10-foot wire fence that the band toured behind, too. Even though I find Ministry's new industrial/hardcore sound one-dimensional, I couldn't take my eyes off the screen. Pretty much state-of-the-art rock video, in other words. Although the video comes with a Parental Advisory sticker, there's another sticker, courtesy of the band, that asks you to cut out the PMRC sticker and send it to your Congressional and local legislators, telling them that you think your First Amendment rights are being curtailed by right wing extremists. Here here.

[Video reviews by Jim Testa]

DIARY OF A ROCK CRITTER

a beginner's guide to clubland by jim testa

SATURDAY, JUNE 16

The A.G.'s, My 3 Scum, The Lost at ABC No Rio, NYC

A fairly typical Saturday afternoon at ABC No Rio, with a tasty potpourri of totally unknown punk bands from across this fair land of ours. First up were the A.G.'s from New Hampshire (they've released two 7-inch's on Mystic, so you know they're totally unknown), a likable pop/punk band with just enough of a hard/fast edge to titillate the hardcore kids. Next up were My 3 Scum, hailing from Erie, PA, who had a slightly harder edge - although frankly, the most memorable thing about them is that I can't remember what they sounded like. Third on the bill were one of my favorite new discoveries, The Lost. This was their 2nd visit to ABC No Rio and they played much better this time around; they're one of those college-age bands that's just entering its post-hardcore phase, trying out various combinations of metal and garage-rock in pursuit of a new sound. Jim, their guitarist, can tear off a mean 8-bar solo that'd bend the ear of the most hard-to-please metalhead, and he and frontman Brian just look good in front of an audience. (This is no mean feat; one of the most annoying qualities I've found in the parade of new, untried hc bands playing these No Rio shows is a total ignorance of stage presence. It's not just that they don't know how to talk and behave in front of an audience; it's like they haven't even gone to enough shows to figure out how to imitate a real band.)



The A.G.'s

Photo by Jim Testa

SUNDAY, JULY 1

Johnny Quest at Atlantis, Nag's Head, North Carolina

I am in North Carolina visiting my buddy Johnny Puke, who is spending his summer vacation working aboard the Elizabeth II, one of the local tourist attractions which commemorates the site of Britain's first expeditions and settlements in the New World. This whole area reeks of history, as does Johnny, who plays a 16th Century seaman aboard a historically-accurate recreation of a merchant ship. It's called "Living History;" Johnny and four other young actors stay completely in character, speaking in an authentic Elizabethan dialect and goofing on the hordes of tourists who come aboard the ship and ask stupid questions. Anyway, it's my first night here and Johnny's taken me to the local rock club, the sort of place frat boys and surfer dudes hang out after a tough day at the beach chasin' babes and catchin' rays. The band is a popular (for this crowd, anyway) local act called Johnny Quest, yet another four-piece funk/rock fusion combo, part of this massive Funk Wave that I'm telling ya is gonna make the Mudhoney/Soundgarden invasion of longhaired 70's grungoids look like a Golden Age of Rock. If you thought that last trend was bad, wait till you get a load of this one. It doesn't help that ALL these bands worship the Red Hot Chili Peppers, a band who in ten years of recording and touring have NEVER written a memorable song. It's all thumpy bass, flashy drums (with obligatory solos), wah-wah pedals and hi-energy frontmen. Johnny Quest aren't a bad band; in fact, they're very good at their job, which in this case is to make college kids dance like crazy and drink a lot of beer. Their originals lack any sense of originality and their covers border on the bizarre at times

("Ace Of Spades"???) but the stage patter...well, I don't want to go into it. During the obligatory funky bass/drum solo, when the guitar player gets to have a beer and the singer gets down with the crowd, this guy exhorts the boys in the pit to take off their shirts and, once he's done that, asks all the guys in boxer shorts to pull down their pants. "Let's see some boxers out there, I wanna see some boxers!" The homoerotic overtones of this pathetic scene seem to go utterly unnoticed by this crowd, who are all as manly as a rugby scrum, of course. But this whole Funk thing is gonna be one long nightmare for anyone with a little good taste, I guarantee it.

SATURDAY, JULY 7

MDC, Neurosis, Born Against, Trenchmouth and Animal Crackers at ABC No Rio

MDC's unexpected booking at this relatively tiny venue (I guess they couldn't get a gig anywhere else in NYC) brings with it the biggest ABC No Rio matinee crowd yet, and for the first time a whiff of that old CBGB stenchcore scene: ugly, twisted little kids in unwashed, spiky, multi-colored haircuts, studded jackets, and combat boots. How will this evil, sadistic horde mesh with the goofy ABC No Rio moshers, who have set aside all thoughts of pain and punishment in the pit and replaced them with their unique brand of loony hijinks? Amazingly, it went down flawlessly. There was one loud and somewhat angry confrontation when an ABC No Rio regular asked this maniacal black skinhead to take off his metal-studded jacket (the guy was crashing into people hard enough to take some skin off, and I have the welts to prove it)... And although the skin and his shrewish girlfriend gave the No Rio kid a hard time ("This is a

pit, you're supposed to be able to take a little pain!!"), the goon DID take off his jacket and nobody went home with so much as a bloody lip. Bravo.

Okay, to the music... Animal Crackers are the newest NYC/HC supergroup, replete with an ex-Manacled, a Citizens Arrest, and the incomparable Dave Wilentz on guitar (and in scary wrestlers mask). Singer Ted dyed his head green for the event (he started out by only dying his hair green, but by mid-set the cheap coloring he used had run all over his face) and proved an able, energetic frontman. The songs were silly thrash and really not to be taken that seriously; the band sort of sums up the ABC No Rio ethic of "Mosh Hard But Have Fun," which I did. Trenchmouth out of Chicago were a complete surprise and a total thrill - I love discovering bands like this, it really makes a lot of this shit worthwhile. They do a sort of reggae/hardcore fusion thing, with a skintight rhythm section abetted by a lead singer who divides his time equally between wailing, jumping up & down, and playing a set of congas. The double-guitar holler these guys send up is not to be believed - a dense and marvelous combination of melodic riffs and chunky noise. Wow. Neurosis, the gods of stenchcore, were up next, and although this sort of excessive, grinding mosh all sounds pretty much the same to me, it was hypnotizing in its intensity - a turbulent, tumultuous wall of noise that had the crowd gasping for air. MDC - after a weird delay in which an anarchist punk with a tattered flag and a patriotic skinhead enjoyed a lengthy debate on the topic of flag desecration (no fists, just words) - turned in a rousing set of power-punk that shows why they've lasted so long. A great afternoon/early evening, says I.

SUNDAY, JULY 8

Burn, Dmize, Supertouch and Killing Time at CBGB

A semi-historical occasion - the first CBGB hardcore matinee since November, 1989. The word was, no fights or it's all over. A massive and diverse crowd of about 500 skins, punks, metalheads, and bridge & tunnel kids jammed CBGB and moshed their brains out. Amazingly, the center held. No fights. Burn, Dmize, and Killing Time all provided energetic and tight sets, all received with an abundant display of appreciation by the heavily moshing crowd (the pit was a mass of sweating bodies for every band, growing in intensity as the afternoon wore on). CB's has apparently relaxed its band on stagediving; there were plenty of kids leaping headfirst off the stage and nobody seemed too upset about it. Wisely, Hilly Krystal - the club's venerable owner - replaced his wife as the Head Chaperon. I always thought Mrs. Krystal's abrasive manner and the utter disrespect she showed the kids and bands caused more friction than anything else. Hilly was a tower of calm in a sea of bedlam. I even had a chance for a brief interview during Killing Time's set, next door at the CBGB Pizza Boutique:

"It's not like I'm in love with this music but I do think it's valid. I was approached by various people from the bands and they told me that if we started this again in a big way, they would be able to handle it and keep it under control. There's a lot of energy in this music. The bands played very well today, I thought. I like the fact that it [hardcore] is political and social, the bands are really saying something up there. But it's got to be up to the musicians to control it. I had talked to the local precinct and they had police all around the neighborhood today. You couldn't see them but I was told if I needed help to break anything up, they'd be there right away. But it went very well, very well. It's totally up to the musicians in the bands who want to play here now. If they can keep it under the control, if they can talk to their followers and get them to keep it in control, then it'll work."

Burn, Dmize, and Killing Time all turned in tight, high energy sets, only slightly hampered by the fact that every single minute of it sounded exactly the same. Well, the crowd certainly didn't mind, although I found it a bit numbing. Supertouch were the only real change of pace; they seem to be searching for some sort of post-hardcore thing with some funk changes and end up sounding like a second-generation Underdog, without Richie Birkenhead's riveting stage presence.



TRENCHMOUTH

FRIDAY, JULY 13

"Toxic Shock Night" at Maxwells, Hoboken NJ

It's the first night of the New Music Seminar's week of special showcases, a time when every club in Manhattan (and one in Hoboken) hosts tons of cool bands. It's like Disney World for punk junkies like me, but you have to wonder what it really means to the bands... The evening kicked off at 9:30 with Green Magnet School who, as their lanky blonde frontman announced at least six times, are from Eastern Mass. It's early and there are only about a dozen people in the club, but the band doesn't seem overly perturbed and blazes through a very cool set: 3 guitars, lots of hair, not far removed from the Seattle/Sub-Pop shtick but dense rather than heavy, with the 3 guitars each a distinctly different voice in a churning wall-of-noise. Next up were the Datura Seeds, with Paul Mahern (best known as the throat of the seminal midwestern hardcore band Zero Boys) on vox. Paul hasn't lost any of the verve and enthusiasm he brought to the Zeros' infectious punk and delivers the same hi-energy performance fronting the Datura's unique brand of power-pop. Great stuff - there hasn't been a really good pure-pop combo like



HULLABALLOO

Photo by Jim Testa

this around these parts in too long a time. Up next come House Of Large Sizes, a trio that beggars description: raging frontman on guitar, a perky little lady on bass who dresses like a spinster schoolmarm but plays like a mofo, and killer drums. Guest review by KRK: "They're like Sub-Pop but they're funky. They're cool!" Thank you, KRK. Okay, it's funky but it's not funk. Sure you can dance to it, but you'd be just as likely to go out and kill your parents to this beat. Awesome.

Every college comedy flick since Animal House has this stock character - a big fat dopey guy, usually named Sluggo or Biff, who belches all the time, drinks way too much beer, and gets to be the butt of a million grossout jokes. Take five of those guys, put 'em in a band, and let them play the loudest, sloppiest, raunchiest early 70's spudmetal you can imagine and you got Hullabaloo. Man, you ever want to break a lease, throw a party and invite these guys over to play. They doused the room with brew, they broke one of the mikes, they dropped their pants... It was a blast.

As much as Hullabaloo were about having fun, so God's Acre were about pain, angst, and suffering. Nothing went right. They didn't go on until 2 a.m. The guitars wouldn't stay in tune. The amps got temperamental. They played in front of even less people than Green Magnet School. God's Acre are a Chicago-based 3-piece in the Nice Strong Arm vein - blisteringly intense noisecore with an almost psychedelic level of turbulence. After about 5 songs, the guitarist - in a frightening fit of anger and disgust - smashed his guitar in two against the stage and the night came to a shuddering stop. This, then, is what the New Music Seminar too often turns out to be for a band: a 16 hour drive, dreams of glory and major label deals, and an pitiful early morning gig in front of a half dozen bleary-eyed fans ending in a pathetic display of pique. Rock and roll.

SATURDAY JULY 14

Nothing Left, Product 19, Antiem, Inflatable Children, Insight and Supertouch @ ABC No Rio matinee

KRK was dying to see an ABC No Rio show and it was quite a shock after the hatecore matinee at CBGB the weekend before. All the regulars were there and it was yet another day of goofy good vibes and the silliest looking mosh this side of Pee Wee's Playhouse. Product 19 - with only Zack and Jerome remaining from the original lineup, and a new 2nd guitar, bass, and drums - sounded great, pretty tight for so few rehearsals, with a harder edge than before but the same catchy melodies. Antiem was a bit too silly even for me, just a bunch of the regulars (Joe Martin, Rich Oliver, the drummer from Citizens Arrest, etc) goofing on hatecore with some weird female singer and Rich Oliver screaming "Fuck you, you all suck, I hate you" between every song. Inflatable Children from Boston had been to ABC No Rio and knew what to expect; they pumped themselves up by stuffing their shirts with balloons for Popeye-sized muscles and raged through a good tight set of crunchy hardcore. Insight, from Salt Lake City, had that posi-core look about them, but I don't know. They sat in their van by themselves the whole, ignoring all the other bands, borrowed all of Supertouch's equipment (they didn't seem to have any of their own), played four songs, decided they didn't like the p.a. and quit, and then went back in the van and missed Supertouch. Real friendly. Good luck on the tour, guys. Supertouch, well, I don't know about these guys. You sort of think of them as one of the bigger NYC hardcore bands, then they play ABC No Rio in front of 20 people... How big are you if you don't have any local draw? Maybe after their next lp comes out on Revelation things will pick up.



GOD'S ACRE

Photo by Jim Testa

Saturday night was New Music Seminar time again, so we put on our badges and headed out into the hot steamy New York night to find some killer rock n roll. At least that was the plan. Bullet Lavolta was originally scheduled to open a 3-band metal bill at The Marquee, but they cancelled and the Goo Goo Dolls were advertised in their place. You can bet I was there for that, but the Goo Goo Dolls weren't; Rights Of The Accused opened the show instead. The only difference between these mooks and any major label metal band is a record contract. How to describe them? How about Black Sabbath playing Kiss covers. They were followed by Love/Hate -- Kiss playing Black Sabbath covers. A pretty cheesy night.

SUNDAY JULY 15

More Seminar. Jim DeRogatis and Ed Ackerson of the 27 Various were in town and we hooked up for the evening's festivities. En route to the Palladium, we stopped off at Wetlands for a half-set of Birdsongs Of The Mesozoic. This is a weird little club down around the Holland Tunnel, a woody organic room that flows from bar to performance space to an area devoted to environmental activism, with all sorts of flyers, brochures, and petitions available for perusal. The walls are decorated by murals showing kids playing in fields and people celebrating Earth Day. Ed Ackerson said it seemed too pretty for rock and roll, although it perfectly suited Birdsongs' antiseptic modern-classical pieces. A bumpy crosstown car ride later we were at the Palladium for the Mano Negra, a wild French band with eight crazy galoots running across the stage playing guitars, horns and drums, doing some funky fusion of rap, ska, punk, and r&b. Wild. After seeing the inside of the Palladium and satisfying our curiosity about what a bigtime disco looks like (it's smaller in person than it looks on Club MTV), we scurried over to CBGB for the Matador Records festival. This is Gerard Cosloy's new label and everybody who was anybody in Punk Rock at the seminar was there, shmoozing outside or checking out the bands inside. Ken Katkin had told me that the Dust Devils sounded just like early Sonic Youth and he was absolutely right. Urge Overkill (who aren't on Matador) followed with their satin stage gear and killer sludgecore, totally wowing the crowd. The big hype of the evening, Teenage Fan Club from Scotland, capped off the evening's entertainment; a catchy pop band, they've been the flavor-of-the-month in the fickle U.K. music press for a while now. And while I enjoyed their catchy pop with grungy guitar noise, it didn't seem all that different from what every boho with a guitar and a flannel shirt was doing in Hoboken back in 1982. Which just goes to show that times change, but good taste is timeless. Or something.

MONDAY JULY 16

I started off the evening on West 42nd Street - no, not to catch a porno flick. NMS had rehabilitated the Lyric Theater (one of those ancient grindhouses with sticky floors slated for demolition when they start building the "new" 42nd Street) and was putting on a mega-metal all-star bill here. This had actually been tried before, a short-lived experiment by Ron Delsener when he booked D.R.I. and Sick Of It All in this same theater and drew about 100 people. At any rate, this had to be the most physically fit bill of the seminar. The bands had big muscles, the roadies had big muscles, even the scowling metal kids in their black t-shirts and long greasy hair skulking in the first few rows of theater seats had big muscles. As I walk on, Meliah Rage was about halfway through the set, a growling thrashy onslaught which I thought was a big one-dimensional (nothing ever got louder or softer, angrier or quieter, it just raged at one steady pitch). But Al Quint - who knows about heavy metal the way Bo knows football - liked 'em, so I will bow to superior metal expertise on this one. Next up were Mind Over 4, the L.A. metal gods on Caroline. Their last record drew tons of Queensryche comparisons, but they reminded me of Soundgarden, from the heavy post-Zep thudrock to frontman Spike Xavier's manly chest. Spike certainly cuts a dashing figure on stage - he's got that heavy metal heroic pose with the mike stand and the flowing Greek God hair thing down pat. Even when

the local metalkids in the front row were yelling "Go back to L.A., ya faggot!" Spike would just shake his hair, stare them down, and say, godlike, "Thank you."

A quick trip around the corner brought me to The Academy, some old Broadway theater NMS had reopened for some shows. I can't imagine a worse venue for live music, actually; the Academy has a low stage and a level ground floor, so that if two people stand in front of you, you can't see anything onstage. During the opening band, Die Warzau, this wasn't a problem - they sounded like shit, about 90% electronic drums, 8% vocals, and 2% "music," the noisiest, least musical "industrial" geeks I'd ever seen. It didn't help that the anal retentive gorillas someone had hired as bouncers didn't have a clue as to what a live rock audience is like, and stopped the show several times to cool down the crowd just when things were getting interesting. Maybe Die Warzau were as upset about the mix as I was, or maybe they just always trash all of that expensive electronic drum equipment at the end of every set. I didn't really care.



MIND OVER 4

Photo by Jim Testa

I did care about Nine Inch Nails, and so did the crowd apparently; since they couldn't see the stage, everyone just moshed together into one enormous bundle of sweaty humanity at the foot of the stage and bounced up & down through the set. NIN get a lot of credit for being this breakthrough industrial hip hop act, but I think their success comes from the fact that they're so rock and roll. Look at what they give the kids: a real guitar, real drums, real songs with hooks and choruses, even a friggin' power ballad that sounded like Bon Fucking Jovi, for chrissakes. All of this accompanied by nonstop electronic percussion and samples, of course, making it very hip and avant-something. But NIN's real strength is that it's dance music that any kid who's never liked a band that didn't have a Mick or Robert singing lead before can get into.



The only panel worth attending at NMS 11 - "Facing The Future Of Alternative Music" - featured Oderus Urungus and Sleazy P. Martini of GWAR making intellectual mincemeat of Mike Gitter, Steve Blush, and Taang Records' Curtis, which might just prove that the future of alternative music is in the hands of shifty promoters and 7-foot Vikings from way beyond Uranus.

TUESDAY, JULY 17

The evening started early at Tramps, where the cities of Philadelphia, Cleveland, and Washington D.C. were hosting a little bash to hype their various town's efforts. This meant that Cleveland and D.C. didn't have to spring for the thousand clams it costs to have a trade booth at the seminar; they could just give out their bags of promo tapes and singles at this shindig. I stayed just long enough to hear In Fear Of Roses, whose harmonies and emotion-filled songwriting really do make them one of the best unsigned bands around these days (as co-host Jim Clevo pointed out), but when I got stuck with the tab for two \$3 cokes, I decided it was time to split. Where to? A couple of pals from Philly wanted to check out the 24-7 Spyz show at the Marquee, so that's where we wound up - only to discover that the Spyz were on last, and my two compatriots (who didn't have NMS badges) couldn't leave and come back later. It turned out to be a looong night: Four opening bands all playing variations of my newest most-despised trend, Chili Peppers white funk. Low Meato are pretty much known in New York as that band that takes their clothes off on stage (which they didn't do tonight); musically, it's inept scum-metal, with a song about AIDS I found particularly facile and offensive. Egypt proved to be your garden variety white-funk band, so slick and major-label ready that it's a wonder they're not already on MTV boring the nation. The Limbomaniacs, who are from California, played pretty much more of the same, except with a keyboardist whose cheesy Farfisa sound gave the music a nice garage-rock edge that set it off a bit from the innumerable other white funk acts. Primus do the white funk thang too, but they're so gloomy and bottom heavy, it's more like a white funk/deathmetal fusion. The Spyz whooped it up pretty good (to a 90% white crowd, by the way), inspiring massive stage diving frenzies and lots of slamming; that and the hour and the fact it was 125 degrees in the club inspired our party to leave.

WEDNESDAY JULY 18

I was too beat at this point to do a lot of clubhopping so I opted for the Marquee again and got to see the Gin Blossoms, whom I liked a lot more than I thought I would. A guitar pop in the

vaguely post-R.E.M. guitar-pop tradition, they hail from Tempe, Arizona (which they must have mentioned 8 or 9 times) and have a comfortable, down to earth style about them. They threw in a couple of cool covers ("Sugar Sugar" done R.E.M. style was really good) and left me entertained and happy to be there. Next up were Agitpop, from upstate New York, whose wired percussive noise-pop is almost impossible to describe. But I liked them too, original and offbeat and yet very accessible and down to earth, and the drummer plays like nobody else I've ever heard. Right across the street from the Marquee is a club called Zone dK that I'd heard a lot about - it's supposedly an S&M club that sometimes has metal bands. Tonight was free to Seminar badges so I flashed my badge and walked in to check it out. It's not really worth the trip if you're just curious about the decor. You wander through a short maze and come out in a room that looks sort of like the dungeon in a bad Italian horror flick, with a big video monitor over the bar and a fairly small stage. There was some really hideous metal band on stage shrieking their lungs out at a crowd of about 12 people, and a lot of greasy metalheads who kept staring at me and mouthing the word "poser." I suspect Zone dK stands for "Dick Head" and they just spelled the second part wrong.

THURSDAY, JULY 26

Dog Tired, Flipper at Maxwells - After sleeping an entire week to recover from the rigors of NMS, this seemed like a good show to begin clubhopping again, since it was advertised for 7 pm and would almost certainly be over by 11. Sure enough, by 7:30, NJ's own Dog Tired took the stage. They turned out to be an inspired choice for an opening band, since they managed to draw the entire Kearny punk rock mafia into the club. Without those kids, the place would've been empty. The band ran through an aggressive set of their slashing, angry punkcore, stopping every so often to yell out something appropriate like "Sub Pop Sucks!"

I wasn't really sure what to expect from Flipper... One member dead, the band itself unheard from for years, and I was never that big a Flipper fan the first time around. But the show turned out to be a wonderful surprise. The band sounded great - tight, eager to play, obviously enjoying their comeback and playing to the crowd (most of whom looked young enough to be their kids) with relish. And the songs sounded great too; I'd forgotten how

many cool tunes Flipper had -- oh sure, I remembered "Sex Bomb," but how about "Life Is What We're Living For" and "Ha Ha Ha?" Great stuff, and it sounded great to hear it all again. When Flipper emerged in the middle of the L.A. hardcore boom, we were all so used to songs flying by at 125 mph that their slow grindcore sounded like it came from Outer Space. Now, after 5 years of Mudhoney and Soundgarden, Flipper not only sounds right, but makes you realize where the whole bottom-heavy Seattle sound got its start. Let's hear it for the old farts. They won me over, big time.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 30

Fuel, Adrenalin O.D. at Maxwells - There was actually a third band on the bill that opened up. I don't remember their name and don't need to know it, thank you. About the only positive thing I can say about them is that before they started playing, the concept of a Guns 'N Roses cover band had never seriously entered my mind. Live and learn.

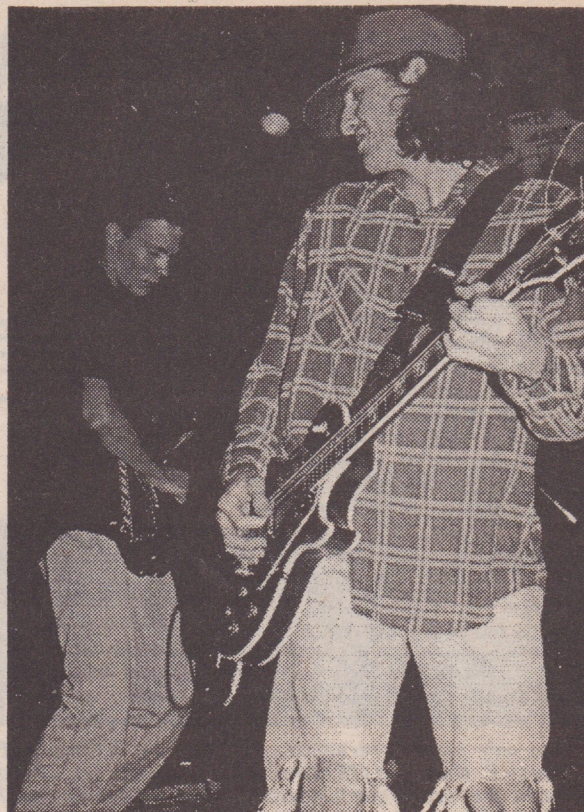
Fuel were there entirely by accident. Another band was supposed to have been on the bill and canceled. Luckily, a couple of the Maxwells guys were at the Pipeline the night before and caught these San Francisco punksters tearing the place apart, made a quick call to Todd "He Is Who Am" Abramson, and got Fuel the vacant spot on tonight's bill. Good work, guys. This band rocked. Imagine Jawbreaker as a 5-piece - same irresistibly catchy California punkcore but with two guys and tons of sonic overkill thrown into the mix. Amazing bass (guy played a few tunes with a capo, something I don't think I'd ever seen before from a bassist), great power drums, mind melting guitars, and wall-to-wall melodic tuneage. If you're ever anywhere near a band called Fuel, run out and see them.

A.O.D. came up next, still playing mostly songs from their new lp. The difference between this set and the last time I saw them is that by now, I'd heard the Ishtar lp a bunch of times and could more properly appreciate the new songs. This time around, they've really made good on their promise to drop the whole hardcore shtick; their sound still has a hard edge, but now it's more in keeping with early 70's pop-metal, the sort of thing that catapulted into the Top 10 by accident every so often from bands like Cheap Trick and Sparks. Cool? You betcha. Funny? Shit yeah. Entertaining? As all get out. Do I still love this band? Yeah.



MOTEL SHOOTOUT

ROCK CRITTER DIARY



LOOSE

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

Audition Night at CBGB, with Nervous Wreck, Motel Shootout, and Loose

I almost always have a good time at these CBGB auditions, even though I think the practice borders on the criminal (bands play for free, the club charges \$3 at the door and keeps all the money, plus the bar, and the bands are promised a booking if they do well... but the booker, Louise, is never at these things, so the band is "graded" by the soundman - and I've yet to meet a band that got a decent paying gig or could even get Louise to take their phone calls after a good audition).

The other problem is that these things tend to be overbooked and run late (in that regard, they're EXACTLY like a real CBGB gig), so while I was told to be there by 9:30 to see Motel Shootout, I wound up catching the last song by an unidentified trio from Tremont Ave. (I know that because they said their last song was about their neighborhood, Tremont Avenue) and then, lucky me, an entire set by Nervous Wreck.

The Wreck are a cheesy metal four-piece; all four guys took to the stage barechested, with shoulder-length hair fluttering in the breeze. Right away I figured, oh shit, another Chili Peppers ripoff, but not, they turned out to be pop-metal with a touch of glam, sort of a New York City version of Poison or Motley Crue. Interchangeable riffs and a truly lumbering drummer (who had a kit bigger than my living room) made their set something of an ordeal, but they packed the house with friends and got a rousing ovation. I bet the soundman, who used to be in Prong or something, liked them too. (As an aside, waiting for Nervous Wreck outside was their tour bus. Not a minivan or even a Winnebago-type deal, but a real BUS. Go figure.)

Anyway, the metalheads left and a handful of Brunswickites trickled in for the main event, a 3-band caravan of Brunfuss' finest: Motel Lookout, Loose, and Bad Karma. Motel Lookout features Keith Hartel, probably best remembered as the interim bassist for Adrenalin O.D. (after original member Jack Steeples and before current bass dude Wayne Garcia). Keith has long straight hair down PAST his shoulders these days, and fronts a solid combo that plays what I could only describe as hard

rock/pop. Some of the slower, more tuneful songs - mostly due to Keith's vocal inflections - reminded me of a much harder Smithereens. The harmony vocals from the drummer deserve special notice, as does this guy's drumming - crisp, quick, and inventive. Unlike Nervous Wreck, who did a lot of "How ya doin', Noo YAWK?" type stage patter, the Motel were all business, quickly moving from song to song, smoothly handling a minor technical glitch (the bass died for about two minutes during a song), and turning in an impressive, professional set. Let's see if they get a real gig out of it.

Next up were Loose, which features Hartel's ex-bandmate (from Pleased Youth, one of the earliest Buy Our Records punk bands), Paul "Westerberg" Decolator on rhythm guitar and a hot new prospect from the minor leagues, Mike Flaherty, on lead guitar and vocals. Loose is squarely in the Soul Asylum tradition of borrowing from the best 80's guitar bands (Husker Du, Replacements, and the like); they look great on stage, they've got a passel of tunes that blew me away, dynamite dual harmonic guitar arrangements, and they're tighter than a pair of Keith Hartel's old leopardskin spandex pants. I would have loved to have stayed for Bad Karma, but it was Sunday night, the last bus home beckoned, and my ride never showed up (thanks, Bruce) so it was off to the Port Authority for me.

Someone remarked during Nervous Wreck's set that this audition format reminded them of a Battle Of The Bands. Me too, so I've drawn up a little graph to show how these three groups would rank, based on "Star Search" type criteria like originality, stage presence, and songwriting.

BATTLE OF THE BANDS - Sept. 9, 1990

Band were rated on a scale from 1 to 10, except in categories where the points represent actual numbers (for instance, number of drums in drum kit).

	Nervous Wreck	Motel	Shootout	Loose
Originality	1	5		4
Stage Presence	5	6		8
Songwriting/ arrangements	1	5		7
Musicianship				
Guitar	5	7		8
Bass	4	7		6
Drums	1	8		7
Vocals	2	7		8
Hair	7	6		3
Bare chests	4	0		0
Number of drums	8	5		5
	41	55		55

Winner: Tie! Motel Shootout/Loose

Stop CBGB's Awful Bookings!

Do you have a CBGB horror story you want to share with the world?

CBGB - the club that calls itself "the birthplace of punk rock," and remains one of the most important venues for underground music in New York - is one of the worst run clubs in the country.

Take a look at this ad for a typical week's bookings. Do you see one band there that you'd actually pay to see?

One Friday night recently, I went to the club expecting to see Ween, Alice Donut, and False Prophets. Six bands had been advertised on the bill. When I got to the club at 9:30 p.m., two more bands had been added - a total of eight for that one night!! - and Ween had already finished, forced to go on at 8 p.m. (They had been advertised third on the bill). When I left the club at 2:15 a.m., Alice Donut hadn't even set up their equipment on stage yet, and the False Prophets had to follow them.

This is all too typical of the overbooking, hideous scheduling, and abominable treatment fans get from "the birthplace of punk rock." The idea behind having so many bands in one night, one assumes, is to increase the door; if every band draws their own crowd of fans, over the course of a night, lots of people will come through the doors, pay the cover, and drink some beer.

But it doesn't work. First, the bands that tend to pad these overextended bills all suck; they don't draw anyone because nobody likes these bands. Atomic Cafe? Crossfire Choir? Big Metal Insects?

Secondly, this booking policy is keeping people away. I know a lot of regular clubgoers who won't see a show at CBGB anymore because you never get to see the bands you're there for; they either go on too early or too late.

So we want you to send us your worst experience at CBGB, whether you're in a band or just went as a fan. We'll collect all the stories, print the best ones, and send the whole bunch to CBGB's owner, Hilly Krystal, asking him to take some action to correct some of these problems. Let's see what happens.

And just to make it worth your while, the writer of the best horror story will get a lifetime subscription and a Jersey Beat t shirt, and the next two best entries will get t shirts too.

Send your entries now, and include your name and a return address, to: CBGB's Sucks, c/o JERSEY BEAT, 418 Gregory Ave, Weehawken NJ 07087.

CBGB OMFUG
315 Bowery (at Bleecker) NYC (212) 982-4052

WED. SEPT. 5
3D -UNCALLED FOUR
Chemical Cat - Loveland
VIOLET LOVE

THURS. SEPT. 6
GODDESS
EDERLY - SIRENS
Mechanical Bride
Lie Detectors

FRI. SEPT. 7
A-KINGS
Wooden Soldiers
LAVA LOVE
ANNIE & FRANK
GOLDEN & CARILLO
THE GREAT OUTDOORS
HORDES OF MONGO

SAT. SEPT. 8
Menace De Ment
WELL BABIES
FLIGHT OF MAVIS
OF CABBAGES & KINGS
ANGEL ROT

SUN & MON EVES -AUDITION SHOWCASES-

TUES. SEPT. 11
Counter Culture
NO WALLS-JUPITER
BIG TROUBLE HOUSE
MAD HATTER

WED. SEPT. 12
Jon Booth's Rainforest
SERIOUS PILGRIM
MR. RIGHT
JETTISON CHARLIE
INDIGO

ALICE DONUT

"Demonologist"/"My Boyfriend's Back"

Alternative Tentacles

Having heard that Alice Donut had not only lost their deal with Alternative Tentacles but had broken up as well, I was heartened to see this single turn up in the mail and watch the band return to the club scene. "Demonologist" is classic Donut, with Tom Antona's screwy nasaloid vocal wailing about spirits with his usual psycho abandon. The band's terminal deconstruction of "My Boyfriend's Back" will probably set 60's music back...oh, about 30 years, right about where it belongs.

- Jim T.

BAD THING

"Stop"/"West Texas"

Big Money, Box 2483 Loop Stn, Minneapolis MN 55402

"Stop!" is Amphetamine Reptile styled sludgy hard rock, while the B side slows things down a bit, and gets into that garage stomp groove you usually find on labels like Get Hip! and Skyclad. An lp is forthcoming, or so it says on the very nicely done pic sleeve. Mine is on candy apple red vinyl. Nice job.

- Jim T.

BIG FAG

3 Song EP

560 W 43 St, #30G, New York NY 10036

Catchy, chirpy, and very innocent sounding pop, with the light touch of Buddy Holly. So why the name? I mean, how many gigs would they get in New York if they called themselves, say, Big Kike?

- Jim T.

BIG TROUBLE HOUSE

"Watered Down"/"Eden Rock"

Comm 3/Horse Latitudes, Box 300021, Minneapolis MN 55403

Subtle touches of funk and reggae help flavor "Watered Down," a tasty exercise in frantic, displaced Lower East Side-style noisecore. "Eden Rock" sort of defines First Avenue cool, circa 1990. Engineered by Steve Albini, if you care. Watch for this band at the Pyramid Club.

- Jim T.

The Singles Scene

CHIKARA

"Jesus Was A Capricorn," 3 song EP

Chikara, Box 65331 Stn F, Vancouver BC Canada V5N 5P3

"Dusty Rooms" is about as good an example of Canadian popcore as you'll find, at least until the next Doughboys lp turns up, with fiery harmonic guitars and lots of catchy hooks. The vocals seem a bit more mature, at least compared to the teenybopper angst of the lp these dudes released under the name Desperate Minds a year or so ago (leaving the desperate teenybopper angst market to the Porcelain Boys, I guess). The Kristofferson cover shows a nicely bent sense of the absurd.

- Jim T.

CITIZENS ARREST

A Light In The Darkness, 7" EP
Wardance

Eerie sleeve, blood red vinyl with imitation blood splatter, "Soaked in others' blood!" Standard hc songs about and against violence, hatred, cops, etc. peppered with a purveying sense of disgust with it all. Not different or outstanding, but good for the format. (So Freddy, when are you going to pay for that half page ad you took out last issue? - Jim)

- Tom B.

EARTHPIG

"Sweet Chocolate Brown" b/w "King Of Prussia"

Singles Only Label

Oh shit. The band broke up and the label may be defunct, but if you're a fan of "sonic pop" (in the tradition of the Babylon Dance Band or, closer to home, New York's Das Damen), then try to find this single. "Sweet Chocolate Brown" begins with an intriguing guitar riff, then kicks into a classic early 70's "Rock" chorus. The lyrics don't make a lot of sense - I gather this is a romantic ballad of sorts - but the hook, in which bassist John Andresen's impassioned vocals announce he's losing his mind over this girl- will stick in your head hours after the record's stopped spinning on your turntable. The flip side is a hard rocking instrumental.

- Jim

THE EX

"Lied Der Stienklopper"/"Stonestampers Song" 45

Ex Records

The Ex are one of the only overtly political bands I can tolerate, and that's because they're so great musically. The A side is a traditional version of this protest song, written by German satirist Kurt Tucholsky. The B side is a grinding, crushing, Ex-treme rendition as forceful as the lyrics suggest (they're printed in English and German). The guitar sounds like a Harley revving up and the drums are like machine guns. I don't know if this song is on their newest lp, Joggers And Smoggers, but as a single it stands steady as a rock (ugh!).

- Jodi

4 COYOTES

SCAT Nine EP

Scat, Box 141161, Cleveland OH 44114

4 Coyotes used to be called Ghost Sonata and come from Cleveland. This sounded great until the vocal kicked in and I realized it was supposed to be played at 33, not 45, rpm. At the right speed, this comes across as fairly typical "college radio rock," with just enough individuality to suggest that the band managed to ace R.E.M. 101 and moved up to Twangy Guitar Pop 202.

- Jim T.

FUEL

"Take Effect," 4 song EP

Lookout, Box 1000, Laytonville, CA 95454

Fuel are a San Francisco popcore band with musical ties to bands like Cringer and Jawbreaker, although they take their double-guitar format and layer on tons of cool sonic effects that lift this whole genre to another plane entirely. The lyrics beseech the listener to rise up and take action - there's nothing specific or political, just a call to make the world better by being a better and more fulfilled person yourself. The "Fuel Hymn" is subtitled "Activate," which is what they try to do to their listeners' brains. Not a bad goal for a band.

- Jim T.

GOD AND TEXAS

4-Song EP

Love Hammer, Box 10073, Cols, OH 43201

Slightly thrashier but still much like Das Damen, right down to the offkey vocals and omnipresent wah wah pedal. I prefer the spacier, slower A side to the more hardcore-ish B side.

- Jim T.

HUMIDIFIER

"Louder Than Yr Mom" EP

1086 Tulsa St., Uniondale NY 11553

I thought this was supposed to be played at 45 rpm, so I put it on and it sounded kinda like a speedier Magnolias. Then the singer kicked in and he sounded like Alvin... After I changed the speed, it sounded like a less thrashy Husker Du by way of Soul Asylum (quite good, actually). The tunes have a bass you can actually hear, loud drums and a pretty decent guitar. Lyrics are really strange, I can't figure them out (thank god for lyric sheets). The whole record sounds like a bunch of college kids with the entire Twin/Tone catalog memorized. I like it, but it wasn't louder than my mom, who screamed "WHAT IS THAT?" all through this one.

- Jodi

JAWBOX

4 song EP

Dischord/DeSoto, Box 60335, Washington DC 20039

Jay Robbins, perennial sideman in Government Issue - gets to take centerstage as singer/guitarist for Jawbox. This is a solid postpunk effort, postpunk apparently meaning anything that sounds vaguely like either Husker Du or Fugazi, I guess. Crunchy riffs that crumble in your hands like sugar cookies is the metaphor that came to mind as I listened to these tunes. Each song begins, seems to fall apart at the seams, and then pulls itself back together and roars on. Jawbox will surprise a lot of people; it sounds like somebody's first band, full of energy, rhythm, and ideas, not the band of somebody who's been on the scene for years and has seen it all already.

- Jim T.

LIBIDO BOYZ

"Childhood Memories"

Red Decibels/Twin/Tone

Slightly metallic but catchy hardcore from the eternally boyish Libido guys. This 3 song EP shows a lot of growth (or maybe just their first decent production budget) over anything I've heard from them before, especially with the poignant and effective depiction of child abuse captured in the title track.

- Jim T.

LUNACHICKS

"Cookie Moshter"/"Complication" 45

Blast First English import

Kinda funny that the one of the hottest groups in NYC right now doesn't have an American label. I guess by now you either love these gals or, like me, figure you'll never quite get the point. But just for the record, this is thrashy girl-group scum rock. The A side is a clever (I guess) spoof on those Sesame Street bits that look like tv commercials but actually teach kids how to count.

- Jim T.

MOTORCYCLE BOY

"Feel It"/"One Punch" 45

Flipside

One of Flipside's "Jukebox Series" slabs on a bitchen blue vinyl. The only question is where is the location of said jukebox? By the looks of the sleeve, maybe a biker bar in L.A.? The 'Boy are from Hollywood, ironically enough. By the sound of this, they'd rather be in NYC. Heavy guitar, a big of wah-wah on the A side. The type of tunes you know people who hang out in the Lismar Lounge like.

- Jodi

MUDHONEY

"You're Gone"/"Thorn"/"You Make Me Die" 45

Sub-Pop

Mudhoney rules. No questions about it. These three tunes are just the thing to keep us sludgemonsters happy until the guys get it together in the studio for a new lp. All three are heavy, heavy distorto guitar-dominated things as thick as, well, mud. It goes down even better when the volume is cranked up as loud as it'll go. A record to piss the neighbors off with. I love it.

- Jodi

NEOMORT

"The Best Things In Life"/"Killer Instinct"

Big Money

Pissed off Seattle sludgecore, with a singer whose voice sounds slowed down, even at 45 rpm. Growly, angry, and loud.

- Jim T.

ROLLINS BAND

"I Know You"/"Earache My Eye" 45

Sub-Pop

Another Sub Pop Singles Club slab, pink wax, ltd ed., etc. ... nice cover photo of the band doing the crotch grab (no one said anything when Roseanne Barr did it) and the back has got a closeup of smilin' Hank himself, that hard man, so good to find... I'm not really a fan of spoken word stuff, but the A side is quite a good narrative about being an introvert. The flip is a really aggro rendition of Cheech And Chong's "classic" anthem for crisscrossing punks. Sim and Andrew have that telepathic link or something that makes them the heaviest rhythm section around. Reason enough to hunt this down, if you haven't got it already.

- Jodi

SANITY ASSASSINS

"Ginger Bread Nightmare," 45

Tombstone, Box 1463, Clackamas OR 97015

Forget the mailorder address, this is a local band who also appear on John Lisa's new "If Its Too Loud" compilation. The Assassins pummel the senses with psychotic noiserock reminiscent of Pussy Galore on the A side, then try their hand at Damen-damaged guitar overkill on the B side. Loud, thick, and punchy. Your move.

- Jim T.

THE SCRODS

"Voyage Into Hell" EP

Profane Existence, PO Box 8722, Minneapolis MN 55048

High school kids with leather jackets decided that they needed a surefire way to get girls, so they formed the Scrods. If I liked heavy metal more, I might've liked this. Music is ok but the lyrics are really stupid. They'd be right at home being the first band at one of those Tuesday night 5-band marathons at CB's. No amount of alcohol or drugs could make this sound better. The title is unintentionally true.

- Jodi

SEAWEED

"Just A Smirk"/"Installing," 45

Leopard Gecko

Dear Uncle Jim,

This new 7" by Seaweed is really cool. I like it a lot! You were wrong about bands with 5 members, these guys are really good and NO SPANDEX! They sound kinda like a clean Mudhoney, but they've also got a really good melodic sense. The riffs are thick, the drums are loud, and the singer's got a nice voice. This is a TF Godhead single, Uncle Jim. Could you get me their debut EP for Christmas? (Or in my case, Chanukkah?) Or send it as a CARE package to me at school? Why isn't mine on sea green vinyl like it says on the sleeve? Oh well, just gotta live with it. These guys are kinda cute, can't wait to see them live too!

Your niece,
Jodi

SOCKEYE

"Coprophagia" EP

% Dave Schall, Box 2143, Stow OH 44224

Sockeye have always been cool guys, and their lead singer Dave also does a nice little fanzine called Ear Of Corn. This 7" has eight songs in the Sockeye style, which means mutant viral weirdness that will probably annoy the hell out of you and your cat. I don't mind their oddball side but I wish they'd outgrow their adolescent misogyny -- some of these songs come from the point of view of a socially retarded teenage boy who's still so scared of girls he can't do anything but pretend he hates them. It's just not the sort of thing I can justify as "art."

- Jim T.

YUPPICIDE

"Fistfull Of Creditcards," 5 song EP

Evacuate, Box 2176, Times Sq. Sta, NYC 10108

State of the Art NY/HC, the difference to be found in Yuppicide's lyrics, which poke fun at most of the things that NY/HC bands have stood for over the last ten years. "Fistfull Of Creditcards" is their anthem and statement of intent, a declaration of war against the yuppie scum gentrifying their Lower East Side turf. But the prize cut here is "Be A Man And Slam," a masterstroke of parody which takes dead aim at the CBGB moshpit mentality: "I whip my elbow real hard/think about the clubs from which I'm barred...poor little sucker got in my way/now the ambulance has to take him away."

- Jim T.

IF IT'S TOO LOUD...YOU'RE AN ASSHOLE

4 song compilation 7"

Tragic Life, Box 060623, Staten Island NY 10306

Tragic Life is Jersey Beat writer John Lisa's label, and Gutwrench is his band, but I'm not just playing favorites when I recommend this disc. Gutwrench's cover of the Zero Boys' "Civilization's Dying" is a perfect note-for-note recreation of that Hoosiercore classic, right down to the milk-fed innocence in the lead vocal; not bad for a couple of mooks from Staten Island. Earth Pig recorded "Greedy Gus," a knockout tune with the band's humongous guitar sound at its finest, before breaking up and leaving the world a sadder place for the loss. Staten Island's New Rose turns in a punky "Too Many Questions," and Sanity Assassins get heavy and hard with "Calling Out." Only 500 pressed so act quick.

- Jim T.

Demos

ALL ABOUT CHAD - Chad's Got A Demo

% Asif, 374 Bergen St #3, Brooklyn NY 11217-2057

All About Chad consists of 1/2 of Slugfest (guitar and drums) and 1/2 of Traci Lord's Ex-Lovers (vocals and bass), which kinda makes you think this'll be some sort of scum rock thing. But it's more like the lighter side of the Ex-Lovers, with Ben Reiser's whimsical and innocent vocals giving the material its shape and character. Besides, the guitars aren't distorted, or out of tune, and there isn't any girl in the band, so they couldn't be Scum Rock. "Chad's Got An Earring" takes a light-hearted look at life on the Lower East Side, and "Embarassing Moments" is as pretty and ingenuous a pop tune as you're likely to hear this year. Since this was apparently recorded live on a 4-track or something, the production's not exactly studio quality, but it's enough to make me think I'll want to see these guys live when they start playing out.

- Jim T.

ALL FALL DOWN - "Grapes O'Wrath" 8 song demo

PO Box 9301, Schenectady NY 12309

Pretty good melodic punk with some catchy choruses, although Kate, the bass player, should sing on more songs, since her songs stand out more than anything by the male vocalists. Overall, though, pretty enjoyable if you like punk with some metal and melodies thrown in. Lyrics with a message, alos.

- Jamie T.

ANIMAL CRACKERS - 9 song demo

Thrashing Mad, 28 Perry St #1F, NYC 10014

A supergroup of sorts emerging from the ABC No Rio kids, with members of Citizens Arrest, the Manacled, Antiem, not to mention a few fanzine editors and assorted hangers on. This first demo has that live-in-the-basement lo-fi production quality that makes repeated listening something of a chore, but when the band gets revved up on the few "real" songs here (there's a lot of fooling around, between song samples, and laughing into the mike), they're capable of aggressive moshcore on a par with the best of NY/HC's newer units. Not surprisingly, given how goofy the No Rio scene is, there's some very funny stuff on the tape that doesn't have much to do with the music, but a lot to do with these kids' let's-have-fun clubhouse attitude. Stay tuned.

- Jim T.

BAR SINISTER - "Sin Now, Pray Later" demo

(914) 268-6063

Wall-to-wall guitars and some pretty neat drum rolls save this New York band's demo from my "let's see how many times I can fling this tape against the wall until it explodes into thousands of tiny pieces" stress test. I just can't deal with a singer who can't sing and choruses like "You fucked with me/now you can die." So much for lyrical poetry.

-Craig D.

BLESSED DEATH - "Terminal Rage" demo

96 Rte 24 RD2, Mendham, NJ 07945

If the name Blessed Death sounds somewhat familiar, it's probably because you remember the band from its days with Megaforce and Roadrunner Records. 1990, however, has left this NJ outfit without a record deal - although they are currently negotiating with a European company - and has forced them to release this self-financed EP, "Terminal Rage." This tape is your basic scream and growl thrashfest, not much more and not much else. The band sounds tighter and more mature than many of its peers, although it's not my cup of tea. I do know decent thrash when I hear it, though. Not if I could only figure out the meaning of their screwy lyrics.

- Craig D.

MICHAEL BOWMAN - "Fuzzy Logic"

56 Cleveland Avenue, Nutley NJ 07110

This starts off with an annoying, hiccuppy sound that becomes



ANIMAL CRACKERS

more likable as it gets set in a mood backed by a synthy beat. Lyric of significance: "It's so hard to be happy in a harvest of pain." It takes a few listens till this stuff sinks in. But I've sort of grown fond of it.

- Tom B.

DAVE & THE RAVE - "Walkin'"

Big Toe, 365 2nd St., Jersey City NJ 07302

A 4-song demo by a four-piece. "The Walk" and "Act Of Rejection" are pretty cool. This is basic rock (?) with a slight rockabilly influence, but not enough to annoy me. Ok/listenable.

- Tom B.

DEAN TOWN - "Mr. Serious" demo

89 Ashwood Ave, Summit NJ 07901

Dean Town is a South Jersey band who sound more like a jack of all trades - attempting to utilize the finer points of both hard rock and pop rock - who ultimately lose their musical direction as well as listener interest. Instead of taking advantage of an individual song's highlights and pushing them to their fullest potential, the band continually changes direction - from hard rock to commercial metal to pop.

Plagued by terrible production, "Mr. Serious" sounds devoid of all feeling and spontaneity. And that's a shame, because the one thing Dean Town lacks is EMOTION. Yes, that little seven-letter word has taken bands with little or close to no talent right up the rocky industry mountain to the top of the music world. And watch out if you've got a weak stomach, this tape has the cheesiest keyboard solos you could ever conjure up.

- Craig D.

FALLING STAIRS - "Mad Under" 2 song demo
PO Box 4186, Bay Terrace NY 11360

Given R.E.M.'s ascension into the Pantheon of rock 'n roll immortals, it's really become no less banal to say a new band "sounds like R.E.M." than something like "the Smithereens sound like the Beatles." But hey, this IS a strummy guitar band with "that" sound, maturing, it seems, into quite a good one. "Mad" seems an unlikely candidate for a two-song demo, being a fairly quiet and slow tune, but it builds emotional tension quite well and sticks in your head as a result. "Under" is more along the lines of a "Radio Free Europe" type of rocker (only not that good, natch), with soaring choruses and a catchy melody. Two good songs that I've played repeatedly (their lp sounded so derivative I filed it away almost immediately, so I guess they're improving. Plus I don't listen to R.E.M. much anymore, which makes the Falling Stairs' version of the same basic precepts seem that much fresher.)

- Jim T.

GREEN MAGNET SCHOOL - 4 song demo
108 Cochituate, Framingham MA 01701

Imagine a slightly less psychotic Nice Strong Arm and you have an idea of this demo. It really doesn't give you an idea of what they're like live - much warmer, more likeable, kinda goofy, cool haircuts - but these four cuts do pack a wallop, with tons of guitar noise piled onto post-psychedelic vocals that almost but don't quite make sense through all the din. A good tape to play real loud when you wanna blow out the eartubes (or annoy the neighbors).

- Jim T.

HAVING A BALL - ORANGE COUNTY NY HARDCORE COMP

% Artie Lynch, 14 Wilbur Ave, Middletown NY 10940

This is a pretty stock mix of various NY hardcore bands - all are mid to fast hardcore and not really very interesting. Standouts are Poor Excuse and Anguished Society, still these aren't that good, and most of the bands suffer from poor production. There are eight bands on this tape and each sing two to three songs.

- Jamie T.

MATTER OF FACT - "Demo '90" 7 song demo
26 Mary Ellen Lane, Erial NJ 08081

An angry young hardcore band and you pretty much know the rest. The production sounds crisp and professional, way above average for this sort of young (I think they're still in high school, judging by the liner notes to the cassette) group, and singer Jeff Fisher articulates his outrage at the various injustices addressed in the lyrics convincingly. Nice package too, with lyrics.

- Jim T.

MONDO CANE - Demo

5280 Eldorado Drive, Bridgeport, MI 48722

Imagine Creedence, hardcore, and a drop of country combined with music highs and lows. The song "Think" contains these memorable words: "I've got a million reasons to be young again, I will never let her know the misery that burns inside of me." Further tales of loneliness continue on "Missed." Mushy tape quality but worth getting.

- Tom B.

ONION HOUSE - Demo

208-1550 Richmond Ave, Victoria BC V8R 4P7 Canada

Jazzy, rock and roll teen dile seekers, with those typical lame themes, "I'm so lonely tonight without you..." Yeah, great pal, why don't you just go home, beat off, and get it out of your system? Then play some cool shit. 5 bucks, 5 songs.

- Cold Iron

OUT OF CONTROL - No Police State demo

% Jim Pica, 201 Philips Ave, Elmwood Park NJ 07407

An excellent Jersey Oi-Positive session. Strong vocals, mediocre production, real meaty moshy stuff & the cassette was

recorded in mid-1989. Old, you ask? No, it's this new punk pacifist movement, it takes them a year just to get the promos out.

- Cold Iron

THE SELVES - 3 song demo

% John Raso, Box 1792, Hoboken NJ 07030

Lead singer Mike Reilly has improved 110% since last year's Selves' release, Drinks And Plenty Of 'Em. What was once a nasal, offkey vocalist is now a confident, smooth talent fronting a very forceful band. With a repertoire of recently recorded, laidback, acid-funk tunes under their belt, the Selves are seeking a new label. Three of their best new songs are on this demo. "Pink Letter" starts off with a juicy groove. "Baby" follows with electrifying psychedelia created by Paul Fisher and Reilly's floating guitar licks hovering over all sounds. Good bass lines by Michael Santoro. "Masters Of The Universe" wraps things up by commencing with a sound off of screeching guitar sirens. A jivey rap is tightly harmonized and accompanied by guitar work which once again stands out, but this time in a sneaky, creepy mode. Judging by this small taste of powerful songs, these guys should attract some interest from record moguls.

- Debi R.

SOUND BITE HOUSE - demo
(516) 281-1606

Three songs from this unknown Long Island hardcore band, and three pretty good ones at that. Sound Bite House combine early NY/HC (the singer reminds me a lot of Davy Gunner from Kraut) with more progressive influences like Faith No More and Nomeansno. The result is solid, tight, and energetic punk rock with lots of cool and unusual guitar bits to hold your attention. Excellent studio-quality production too.

- Jim T.

THICK AS THIEVES - "Big Wide World" 10 song demo
630 Governors Hwy, S. Windsor CT 06074

Well, you gets yer pop; you gets yer rock; you gets yer folk; you gets this. Nothing to bitch about, but I hope these guys ain't trying to make a living doing this.

-Rodney L.

TWIST OF FATE - 4 Song demo
718 966-4712

The good news is that this doesn't sound like a demo, it sounds like a professional metal band. The bad news is that it sounds like EVERY professional metal band that gets its newest video on MTV's Headbangers Ball. You got your screaming front man, you got your grinding speedmetal guitars, you got your sensitive acoustic-guitar introductions. If you prefer your underground metal to sound like readymade Whitesnake hits, then this is for you, I guess.

- Jim T.

VALKYRIE - "Past, Present...Future" demo
42 Knoll Place, Clifton NJ 07012

Continuing to incorporate elements of both thrash and progressive metal into their music, locals Valkyrie have released their fifth demo tape. The only nagging problem I have with this band is that it, like so many other thrash outfits, fail to lead this genre to its next plateau - what has happened to originality? How much has thrash really progressed over the past five years? When all is said and done, however, "Past, Present...Future" isn't all that bad. It just fails to excite me, maybe because I've heard it all before (from the likes of Iron Maiden, Nuclear Assault, and Metallica.)

- Craig D.

WENCH - "Stone Cold" demo
PO Box 1242, Jackson Hts, NY 11372

You have to give credit to four women who proudly call themselves Wench. But beyond that, why in God's name would I want to listen to a singer screeching like a dying cat who had just been run over by a Mack truck after being skinned alive?

- Craig D.

What's LEFT!

TAKE OFF
YOUR
CLOTHES
AND READ
THIS

The way society is set up is to pit oppressed people against one another to fight over the same tiny slice of pie.

"The question is not, Can they reason? or Can they talk? but, Can they suffer?"

VEGETARIAN

I support the effort to make Malcolm's birthday national African-American day of commemoration. Recognition of his life, legacy and lessons is long overdue. Malcolm was one of the most extraordinary African-American, and Pan-African, leaders in history. He rose from a life of theft, dope pimping to become the most dynamic leader of the Black revolution. At his funeral, Malcolm was eulogized as "our shining Black prince."

NEVER!

TOO OLD TO LEARN?

For most of the years since the assassination, how the American community has responded to the reality of the American system of racial oppression and economic exploitation is not a favorite of the United States government. But his ruling elite has been anxious to keep his memory and his legacy alive. But his dedicated followers have never forgotten him. He is remembered from the basic tenets of his philosophy to the midst of resurgent racism and devastation in inner-city African-American communities, and with a crisis of drugs and AIDS threatening an entire generation, Malcolm symbolizes the struggle for our liberation. Bookstores find it difficult to keep his HOT and pamphlets on shelves. Records and cassette tapes are sold out. I hate having to convince straight people that lesbians and gays live in a war zone, that we're surrounded by bomb blasts only we seem to hear... Queer Nation was formed in April of this year by a group of ACT UP members interested in doing direct action around lesbian and gay issues. Bias against lesbians and gays had risen by 122 per cent in the first five months of the year, with over 200 antigay and lesbian incidents reported. The philosophy that Malcolm espoused may have seemed for a while to be outmoded. Now it is remarkably on time. His strong adherence to the principles of self-respect, self-help and self-reliance was never more relevant and urgently required.

boy change a vote.

attack

fur stores,

slaughterhouses, and Catholic politician



Try both

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No pro-choice Catholic politician has yet yielded to threats from archbishops, bishops, cardinals



"We're just against the attitude that animals can be used for any kind of experiment, without regard for the fact that they're alive."

WHAT'S LEFT/ By
[HALE 8/900]
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You Can Be A Peacemaker

Man himself is an animal yet he denies rights to all of his fellow animals. the focus is a cluster of cells of his fellow animals. AND the property of the mother.

This is where we meet at nighttime: WELCOME, comrades. There's more, there's more, really so much more. First off: Whilst in New Brunswick, check the ROXY (95 French St across from the Melody) Monday nights, DJ Dennard does Industrial, also Fridays when he mixes it up wit sum House/Dance & amazing scratching. This Kid-Whiz is also on WPRB (103.3 FM) on Saturdays, 9-12 pm, so tune in, turn on, drop out... Thursdays and Sundays, Charles Edward Roland spin "Alternative Music For Alternative People" which breaks down to everything AL DOG-STAR's name is on plus lotsa Goth/Punk; two more fun nights at Roxy... MEANWHILE, in Gotham City, COMMUNION has moved to Tuesdays. Tony Fletcher's the Ace DJ, and it's co-hosted by Neville "That's Fucked" Wells. Two bands between the excel-Industrial/Alternative/Dance discs. That's at LIMELIGHT (6th Ave @ 20th St) by the way, and there's usually plenty of free passes so: Support The Scene, Dude!! Onto the records...

THE INDUSTRIAL SHOP

REVOLTING COCKS - Beers, Steers & Queers (Wax Trax) Well, they've redeemed themselves. After the completely worthless "Physical" single, "B.S&Q's" is a hark back to quality Jourgensen & Co. material. Witness the latest Ministry "lp" as what can happen when one spreads himself too thin, as Al seems to be doing these daze. What with a few excellent side projects: Acid Horse, 1000 Homo DJs, and producing the Skinny Puppy "Rabies" lp, I guess it's to be expected that Ministry take a back seat. At least REVCO hasn't bitten the big one too (yet?)

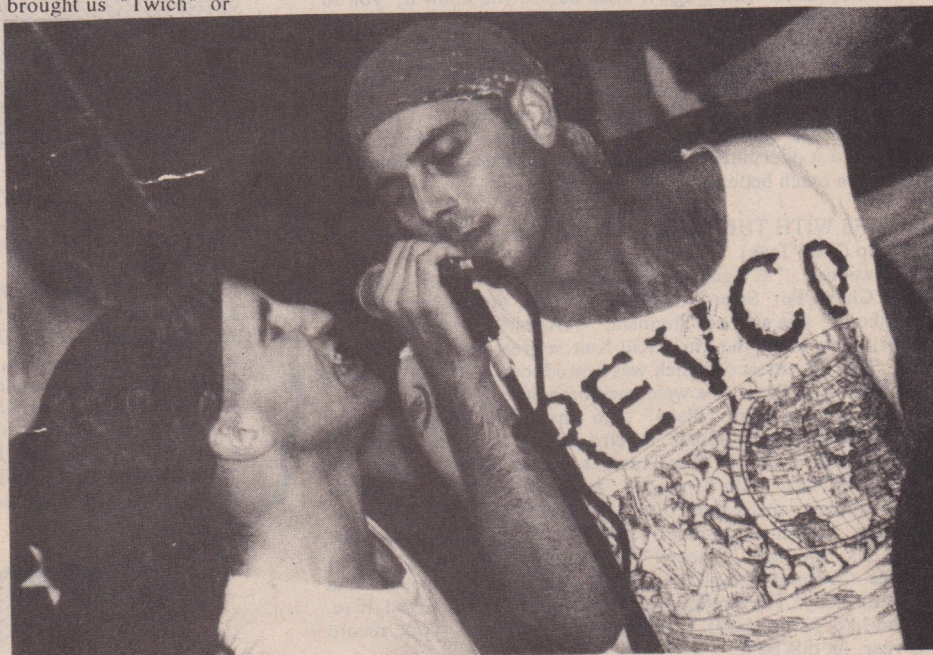
The Album: The title cut, a solid, Industrial/Rap scratch groove at that, continues Al's...er...fascination with Homosexuality. It opens with a sample (intentional or not) urging folks to "Come Out! (if y'all get the chance)" because you know "The Village People were popular...or they used to be." And with raps like "A redneck asshole/who thinks he's great... So full of shit... If you don't like it, I don't give a damn/So Fuck your respect/If you're looking for a reason/don't look any farther..." it's far [left] from another Gay-bashing anthem that we don't need. Great House samples abound too! Also included, we've got the first studio version of "In The Neck," as well as the classic "Stainless Steel Providers." And 1000 Homo DJ fans, rejoice; "Can't Sit Still" & "Razors Edge" recall that sorta bassguitar-heavy thump & grind. Suspiciously, Dessau, a group Al produced, also come to mind (remember the butchered "Isolation On 16 RPM"?). All in all, "Beers..." is a product worth purchase, although it's sometimes hard to believe this is the same guy who brought us "Twich" or "Halloween."

CONTROLLED BLEEDING - Trudge, lp (Wax Trax)

A review in their presskit suggests this lp's opening cut, "Words Of The Dying," is like early Front 242. I think not. The first thing I thought was, Holy Eno, Batman! "Words" has that feel with a goth beat! As does "Crimes Of The Body," both with lush, layered vocal/keyboard sounds. This might be a stretch, but "Crimes..." reminds me of Eno in the way Speed The Plough did during their pre-lp heyday. This track has a mock hardcore twist, so don't get too lethargic, Maaaaannn. "Assembly," like the title suggests, is a low-key industrial-instrumental worth a listen, but on "The Front," the Bleeders get more direct and topical with the sample: "You Can Go To Hell," and the lyrics narrow it down a bit: "Your blind faith's a waste/your cries are a waste/We hate you faith/we hate your faith/we hate your faith!" These lyrics, like the rest of the album, will either worry or comfort, especially knowing their author, Paul Lemos, is an English teacher in New York. There's hope for the future yet!

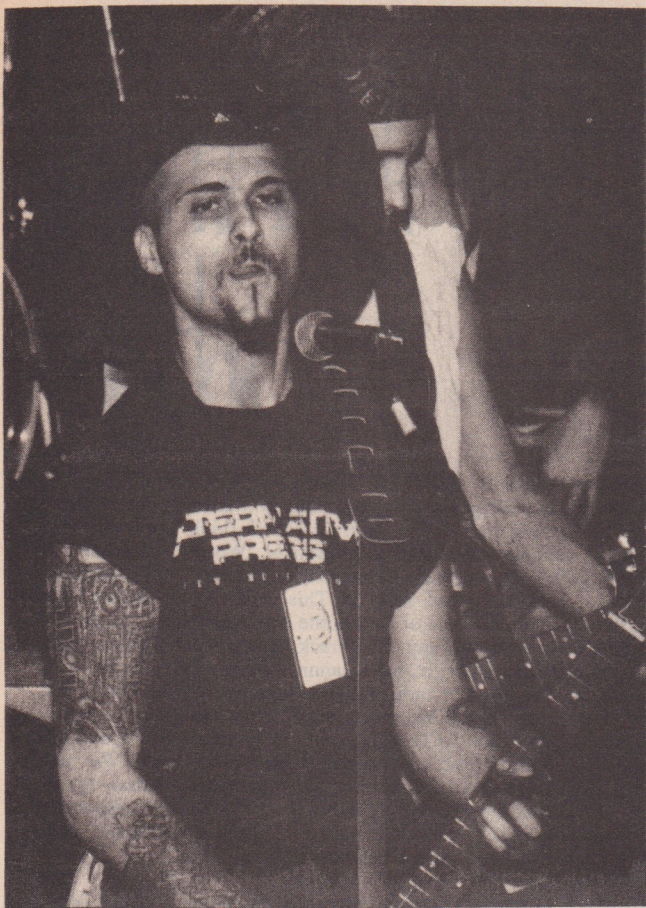
A GUY CALLED GERALD - "Fx, Specific Hate" 12-inch (CBS) Ok, so this is a bit dated, but just missed our last issue. Sounding as fresh as the day it was released, here we've the follow-up to the "Voodoo Bay" single and quite the follow-up, I might add. An excellent techno-House rave, the A side, "Mayday Mixx;" sounds like the mid-120's (bpm) while the flip's "Elevation Mixx" is slowed a bit for a very different (mellow) feel. "Specific Hate" (read: "Pacific State") is a hilarious Dis on former bandmates (808 States') dance-hit of a similar name. This joke is so subtle, tho, "Specific" more than holds its own.

michael
hale



REVOLTING COCKS

Photo by Michele Taylor



THE ALIEN DOG STAR: AL JOURGENSEN

URBAN DANCE SQUAD - Mental Floss For The Globe, CD (Arista)

This Netherlands rock band, and they are a ROCK band, with a DJ - Wow! - start off ok in a boasting-rap sorta way with "Livin' In The Fast Lane" (the single). Then before you know it, you're listenin' ta Lennon Kravitz go mellow/psycho/jello. I guess it's got more "roots" than anything else in this column, but that doesn't make it all right. The homophobic-esque "fagheads" listing in their "No-thank-you's" doesn't help much either, thanks. Anyways, if you dig stuff like Living Colour, Hendrix, Isley Brothers, or (mellow) Sgt. Chili Peppers - this is fer you. Hafta admit it does little for me, tho. Local heroes The Bouncing Souls are a much better bet in this genre.

MY LIFE WITH THE THRILL KILL KULT, Confessions Of A Knife, lp (Wax Trax)

"Confessions..." it's great, give me a drink - I live for drugs! "A Daisy Chain For Satan" kicks off with the best "screams-into-megaphone" this side of "Stigmata." AAAhhAAAAhhAAAAhh, it's brilliant, as are the Thrill Kill Kult, a great new drug, if you will. This lp, most of which was reproduced note for note at their NMS Ritz show, is a welcomed branching out for this label. "...Knife..." is more "disco" than any other idiom, yet the production & samples update its retro aspects to create one of the most original products Wax Trax has released lately. "Days Of Swine & Roses," with its groovy "Stainless Steel" type bass & kick sequence, owns some of the funniest lyrics ever to sound demonic: "Christian zombie Vampire... I am the Father, the Father of Nothing!" Wheew! "Waiting For Mommie," which features the Bomb Gang Girlz, is quite the bad trip; Bananarama on acid, really! The single, "Kooler Than Jesus," remixed here, is God-like (what else?). If you buy no other Wax Trax record this year, let this be it.

FRONT LINE ASSEMBLY - State Of Mind (ROIR Cassette)

This is the (much)belated U.S. release of FLA's second German record on Doisser. More like Skinny Puppy than later FLA releases, which is saying a lot considering the newer stuff is still Puppy-ish. It's a fair cassette, with only about four cuts outta 12 standing out as worth playing again. Kinda like Noise Unit, reviewed last issue, instrumental-mood-sans-drum muzak. Worth a listen...once.

MEAT BEAT MANIFESTO - "Helter Skelter"/"Radio Babylon" (Playitagainsam)

Now this is what dance-floor music is all about! Everywhere I've been, this cut always gets a crowd on the floor. What an amazing track! Sure, it's repetitive as all-get-out, but believe you me, you never want this one to stop -- which it does quite abruptly, so watch out. All samples and beats, it's an instant club classick - Hot 97 should be this HOT! The flip side is similar but the bassline adds a dub-reggae element to the mix -- Oooh, Alright! Caught half of their NMS Ritz show and wasn't very impressed, like De La Soul last year, it wasn't awful it just got BORING after about 3 tunes. Also heard a new MeatBeat cut off a Playitagainsam sampler (TA! Dennard) which was also disappointing, more "pop song"ish, less dancefloor. Jersey Beat still awaits the arrival of the new lp, "99%," which I hear is quite good. We'll see...

TGT - White Stains, lp (Wax Trax)

Initially, this seemed a Front 242 offshoot, right down to one of their videos (very Commando Mix/No Comment). Six songs in all, starts off with "Anthem," with a keyboard track that's a dead ringer for "Batdance"(!). It's a good club hit, not much the listening experience it should be. Mostly instrumental/sampling grooves follow, save "Maching Gun," the best song. This would be good soundtrack music for an industrial Purple Rain, maybe?

IN THE NURSERY - Counterpoint Compilation lp (Wax Trax)

Sheffield, U.K.'s ITN sound like a lot of WWII documentaries. They're somber, haunting, classical, Gothic YET dance at once. Like Laibach, some of it's real rubbish, tho. The Humberstone twins, who make up ITN, have been likened to Nazi/Fascists in more than a few reviews, although I doubt many Nazis would dedicate an anti-war song to Nelson Mandela. "Counterpoint" is a good, moody, late-night record with military-styled snare & timpani to accent the rich strings & horns. Quite creepy.

...and now, "The Playlist"

THE INDUSTRIAL SHOP'S TOP 10

1. UNTIL DECEMBER,lp (CBS)
2. TERMINAL WHITE, Worker/Substitution (White)
3. PRIVATE SECTOR, Don't Take Grace (RoseHill)
4. THRILL KILL KULT, ...Knife (Wax Trax)
5. NEW ORDER, Substance (Quest)
6. REVCO, Beer, Steers & Queers (Wax Trax)
7. SKINNY PUPPY, Rabies (Network)
8. MEAT BEAT MANIFESTO, Helter Skelter (PlayItAgain)
9. BRONSKI BEAT, HitThatBeat/100&1000s (MCA)
10. DIE WARZAU, Disco Rigido (Fiction)

Photo by Michele Taylor

Photo by Michele Taylor



MEAT BEAT MANIFESTO

A FEW "LIVE REVIEWS" KIDS:

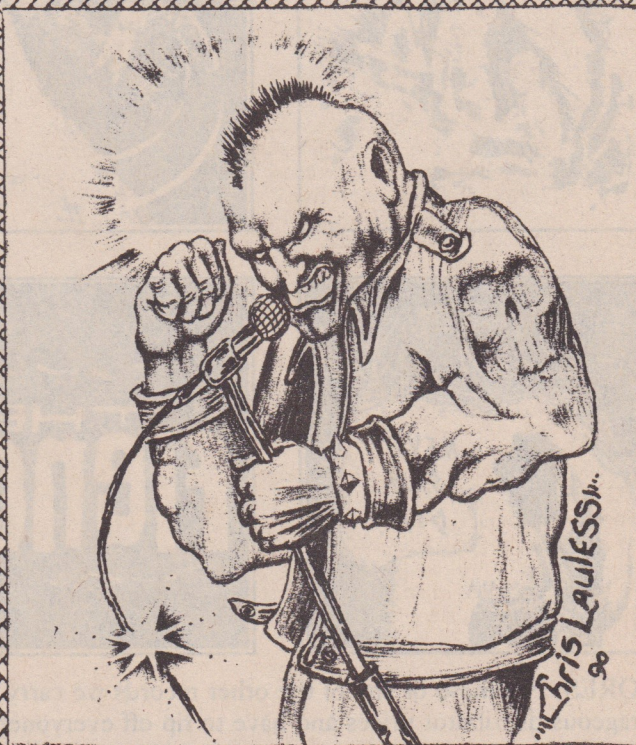
REVCO/Aug 9 The Ritz: Extremely disappointing, especially after viewing the "official" live video from '88, "You Goddamn Son Of A Bitch!" This Ritz performance, or lack thereof, was like watching the Dog Star Man and his pals gettin' drunk & goofing off on some Redneck bar-rock. Possibly trying to out-do the above-mentioned video's two dancers, Revco had about 25 'idiots' on stage, the worst one was some guy from the Mentors (who opened) running around pissing on stage & the audience (?). Al just stood there, foot on monitor, rock "axe," ten-gallon hat, being...well...BAD!!! And they had the nerve to call Johnny Lydon "an old has been" before going into the second best song in the set, "Public Image" (the first being "Stainless Steel Providers.") No light show or smoke to speak of, either.. in fact, I've seen local groups with better stage shows. In short, Revco sucked!

MIST PROCESSION/Aug 10 Communion at Bond Street - Got to listen carefully, being the room was so small, with little distraction. This band's got great potential, if they could just decide on a direction. Basically a duo, Bros. Neilson & Joe, they've added sometimes singer Sue, who's good but not very "alternative" sounding. And being she's only on about a quarter of the set, it takes away rather than adds. I mean, if they're gonna have female vocals, they should go more in that direction; if not... don't. Now it's like watching 2 different bands w/ the same members. Anyways, musically, their midi/electronic gear/programs sound great. Everytime I see 'em, they seem to get more & more danceable too, which is nice. See 'em if you can.

THE NEW CREATURES & ROSARY/Aug 14 Communion at Limelight - Rosary up first, kinda sound like the Damned without the aura or mood, much more "straight" sounding. The set was slow paced and uninspiring. Vocalist sounds like Danzig did back in Misfit daze, but music is more "rock" and mainstream. Ok, but they need that extra something. New Creatures, billed as industrial/dance, they were neither. Good, but not that heavy. Professional stage presence, hot guitarist, and sound that owes to both Bauhaus and some newer Peter Murphy. A band I'd like to see again.

Michael Hale deejays at The Roxy

in New Brunswick on Tuesday nights



SONIC YOUTH

Goo, lp
DCG/Geffen

Sometimes it's not the answers that are the problem, but the question. Everybody's been asking, why did Sonic Youth sign to a major label? Shit, for the money. No problem there. The real question ought to be, why did a major label sign Sonic Youth?

If "Goo," Sonic Youth's debut for Geffen Records, is going to sell Guns 'N' Roses-type numbers (or even R.E.M.-type numbers) (and so far, every indication is that it won't), then common sense tells us that Goo is going to be the first Sonic Youth album an awful lot of new fans will ever buy. Let's listen to it from that perspective... You're a well-meaning, bright kid into new music, and everybody from MTV to Rolling Stone is telling you that this New York band is the wave of the future. You see their video and it's pretty funny, there's this chick dressed up in a 60's go-go outfit and some guys with guitars. So you go out and buy Goo. And what do you hear? A record that practically falls over backwards trying to sabotage itself, that's what. Sister's "Catholic Block" and Daydream Nation's "Teenage Riot" proved that Sonic Youth can write punk songs in a pop idiom (or pop songs in a punk idiom), but on Goo, they don't even bother. The few songs that do take off popwards - largely due to Steve Shelley's wonderfully energetic and propulsive drumming - almost always self-destruct, ending with bursts of feedback and distortion as ugly as a car wreck. Lee Renaldo's "Mote" - dirgy and nasal enough as is - devolves into a 5 minute noise jam, followed by Kim Gordon's monotoned, nursery rhyme'd "Goo." Now picture the Sonic Youth Virgin we spoke of earlier, expecting something cheery and post-modern like the Pixies or the Cure, getting an earful of this. Either the CD goes right back to the store for an exchange, or it gets filed away and never listened to again.

So maybe the question really should've been, Why did Sonic Youth sign to a major label? If they're only going to make records nobody but their original cult of fans will want to buy anyway, they could have made just as much money on a strong independent label, and kept their pigfucker integrity intact. The real winners here are going to be Homestead and SST, since at least a few of those SY virgins will like this stuff on first listen and go running to buy the back catalog. Anybody wanna buy a mint copy of "Kill Yr Idols," first pressing?

- Jim T.

GWAR

Scumdogs Of The Universe, lp
Metal Blade

GWAR need no introduction. The band, known more for their outrageously theatrical performances rather than music prowess, have certainly come of age since their first lp. In the time between 1988's "Hell-O" (released on Shimmydisc) and this album, GWAR replaced drummer Nippleus Erecticus with Jizmat The Gusher. The band also took the time to learn how to play their instruments. Although the speed metal genre that the band has now embraced is hardly the most unique direction to choose, the band tempers it with their own twisted Vikings-From-Hell humor. The production of "Scumdogs" does GWAR justice for the first time, with one song - "Horror Of Yig," produced by Al Jourgensen and Paul Barker of Ministry - a particular standout. The rest of the songs here vary greatly, from the hilarious ("Maggots") to the ridiculous ("Vlad The Impaler"), with three different singers - manager Sleazy P. Martini with a Brooklynese white-boy rap called "Slaughterama," the Sexecutioner's sex-and-violence anthem, and GWAR's bigger than life frontman, Oderus Urungus, who growls his way through nine songs. Love them or hate them, expect big things from GWAR, including a color comic book and maybe even their own role-playing game in the near future.

- Johnny Puke



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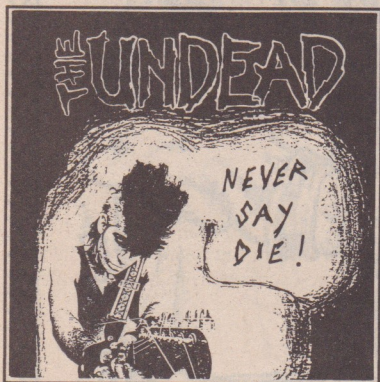
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Records

Records reviewed this issue were received between June and August, 1990, in vinyl, CD and cassette formats. This issue, albums were reviewed by Tom Angelli, Tom Brebrie, Sal Cannestra, Cold-Iron, Craig Donner, John Lisa, Debit Rotmil, Jodi Shapiro, and Jim Testa.

14 ICED BEARS

Precision: Singles 1986-1989, lp
Thunderball U.K.

This record is 15 songs from a bunch of egotistical Brits. They also happen to be brilliant, so go out and grab this slab for ten bucks, willya? Believe me, you'll thank me for it. The 'Bears make catchy pop that sometimes sounds like the Smiths, but as the songs progress (they're in chronological order) they start to sound a little trippy and floaty like Spacemen 3. Pretty, delicate...aw, just buy it and make your own pseudo-intellectual rockcrit comparisons. Another one of those Brit bands to watch for, 'cos it's about time for another British Invasion. You can bet that 14 Iced Bears will be in it along with Lush, Pale Saints, and the Inspiral Carpets.

- Jodi S.

24-7 SPYZ

Millenium Gumbo, CD
In-Effect

It rankles me to have to dump on this band; we really don't review enough African-American-made rock in this fanzine and here I go slagging one of the few local acts to come out of the Black Rock Coalition with a legitimate following. But what do 24-y Spyz have going for them besides a firm grip on Living Colour's coattails? A nondescript sound without any real heartfelt roots in black music - that's evidenced by how quickly they'll revert from their Bad Brains-influenced thrash to icky Steely Dan-ish "Soft Rock" in search of an AOR radio hit. In fact, Millenium Gumbo is one endless parade of empty stylistic exercises without a true spirit or center, all in search of that big hit: thrashcore for the college radio kids, soft rock for mainstream radio, awkward rap and trite sampling for the bloods, all mixed with far too many "overheard" moments of the band laughing at their own bad jokes (you'd think Eddie Murphy produced this, it's so self-congratulatory and smug in its hipness). If 24-7 Spyz ever get a sense of who they really are and make a record that tells me, I'll be ready to listen. But this isn't it.

- Jim T.

27 VARIOUS

Approximately, lp
Clean/Twin/Tone

Look, I hated their first album and was indifferent to the second. So don't think I'm gushing or saying this just because the Various are managed by a good friend of mine, ok? Ok. This record is god. It's the best 60's-influenced (but not retro) slice of postmodern popism to come along since Alex Chilton's brain turned to mush (or at least since Stamey stopped speaking to Holsapple). Lead singer, guitarist, and songwriter Ed Ackerson melds two influences fairly consistently - psychedelic 60's garage 'n pop, especially raga-flavored Beatlesque guitars, with early '80's Hobokenisms. It's the little twists and unexpected changes that make these songs sparkle, and there's a lot of them -- the Robyn Hitchcock ennui of "I Feel Damaged" is buoyed by Stameyesque guitar figures, while "I Can't Wait Til The End Of My Days To Get A High From You, Girl" sounds like some lost Standells nugget until the chorus, when Ackerson shifts gears to gritty Memphis soul ala' vintage solo Chilton. The production's damn near perfect - guitars chime and peel, drums snap, vocals change to match the mood of the song. I'm gushing, I know it. Stop me before I use the word genius. That's what I used to call Scott Miller and Peter Holsapple, and look what happened to them!

- Jim T.

AGONY COLUMN

Comes Alive, 12" EP

Big Chief, 611 Broadway #907E, NYC 10012

Metal-tinged hard rock that tries too much to be rude and daring. No sparks were flying, sorry.

- Tom A.

ASS PONYS

Mr. Superlove, lp

Okra, 1992-B N. High St, Columbus OH 43201

The Ass Ponys (2 stars for the name alone) would work well on the same bill as Bob Mould and REM. If they were pretentious, they would make it with MTV's alternative crowd. They deliver mild countryish tunes with the edge being the cool lead singer's voice and having songs with some spunk and a twist. This isn't for everybody but you can't go wrong by giving 'em a chance. Lyrics accompany the music well, with verses that cause you to think.

- Tom A.

JELLO BIAFRA with D.O.A.

Last Scream Of The Missing Neighbors, EP
Alternative Tentacles

Never particularly familiar with either Mr. Biafra or D.O.A. (so sue me), I was nonetheless knocked out by this collaborative EP. D.O.A. play thick, powerchord punk rock the old-fashioned way (has this stuff been around long enough to be old-fashioned? You betcha.) And while Jello's rants are more than a little tinged with paranoia, at least he's on the side of the righteous. Preach, Brother Jello, preach! The entirety of side two is taken up by 14 minutes of "Full Metal Jackoff," my choice for tune of the year. Intense stuff, yes indeedy do.

- Sal C.

BIG DIPPER

Slam, lp

Epic

Big Dipper have been around for a while, playing their special brand of power pop, but most people haven't heard of them. Why? Because they were on an indie label, that's why. They've got a live rep that most bands would kill for. Now they've got a major label deal and there's no excuse for radio to ignore them. Neither should you. If you like your pop the old fashioned way (catchy and smart), Big Dipper is a band you should pick up on. Bill Goffrier and Gary Waleik have guitar styles that are part jingle-jangle and part 60's Pop. The songs are all short, and each one has Hit Single potential. Slam is one of those discs that grows on you after a listen or two. These guys have got my vote for Most Likely To Succeed.

- Jodi S.

CHANGE OF HEART

Soapbox, lp

Cargo

A 3-piece from Toronto floating on the harder edges of pop/rock for the past eight years. The time spent lends itself to committed songwriting and musicianship, but Soapbox just didn't leave any memorable impressions. Then again, it never claimed to try.

- Tom B.

CRINGER

"Karin," EP

Lookout

The most recent batch off Lookout records has been extremely

good and this EP is a prime example. Although Cringer have had their share of bad recordings and mediocre songs, there's nothing mediocre about "Karin." It's a zippy and powerfully bright pop punk hit, plain and simple. The guitars are loud and clear, the vocals have personality, and the production is quite good. You'll also enjoy the cool hillbilly/square dancing undertones here and there. This will surely put Cringer on the map. Get it. (Great sleeve photos too!)

- John L.

DATURA SEEDS

Who Do You Want It To Be, lp

Toxic Shock, Box 43787, Tucson, AZ 85733

With ex-Zero Boy Paul Mahern on vocals, the Datura Seeds threaten to bring the Power Pop Revival back to America and steal the thunder from all those pretty English bands with the silly names and haircuts. The band, not surprisingly, brings the energy and passion of hardcore to its pop tunes, speeding through the melodies with giddy abandon at times. Mahern, who's been working as an engineer and producer in his native Indianapolis between band gigs, has crafted such a highly polished sound for this lp that it almost sounds too good; on songs like "Volume," this could almost be REO Speedwagon. Live, they're sloppier and more alive, and way overdue for a new record (this one sat in the can two years before it was released).

- Jim T.

DREAMS SO REAL

Gloryline, lp

Arista

Stylewise, this borders between commercial and alternative, and being a snob to most ready-for-radio pop, my concentration would have waned on this one. But this was a nice surprise.

Plenty of smooth strumming provides a shimmering effect throughout. The title song, "Gloryline," starts off with a lovely intro, which grabs some attention. A couple of tracks later, "Cuts Like A Knife" tears away with a nasty, cutting edge. But... And I'm a broken record on this, but all the tracks sound the same - same attitude, tempo, and key persist until you can't tell the songs apart. Despite some monotony, there are nice sounds which will pull you away from a tedious experience.

- Debi R.

FOETUS INC.

Butterfly Potion, 12" EP

Self Immolation/Wax Trax

Foetus Inc. (aka Clint Ruin, aka Jim Thurwell, ad infinitum) is loud and heavy. Assaultive. Scary. You can't understand what he's growling so menacingly most of the time, but nobody complains when David Yow does it, so it's ok. Y'know that sketch on Saturday Night Live called "Annoying Man?" Foetus' vocal style is sorta like his, except it's not that annoying and it's a whole lot meaner. Call him the pitbull of industrial. "Free James Brown (So He Can Run Me Down)" should be an Amphetamine Reptile single. This stuff is nightmare-inducing. Now you know why they call it Foetus Art Terrorism. This EP is all new, not to be confused with the double-lp "Sink" which is a "greatest hits" (!??) compilation.

- Jodi S.

GIBSON BROTHERS/WORKDOGS

Punk Rock Truck Driving Song Of A Gun, lp

Homestead

The Workdogs are not so much a band as a rhythm section for hire, while the Gibson Brothers aren't brothers (or named Gibson), so their collaboration makes perfect sense, in a bizarre



DATURA SEEDS

Photo by Jim Testa



GWAR

sort of way. It certainly works where it counts, which is in the music. This is a great party record, especially if you have the sort of friends who drink too much and like to dance to 13th Floor Elevator records. From "Moody River" - which sounds like an outtake from Dylan's basement tapes - to "Richard Cur," which sets Richard Hell-ish beatnik poetry to a boppin' 6T's beat, there's tons of cheesy good times here; a little primitive and greasy around the edges maybe, but good clean butt-stompin' fun. Yee-hah!

- Jim T.

GWAR

Scumdogs Of The Universe, lp
Metal Blade

The band that rewrote the history books. GWAR's the shit... All their speedcore riffs, guitar licks, sarcastic cannibalistic jokes, and some new Butthole Surfer-influenced noise make for a very addicting album. From the bag pipes on "Horror Of Yig" to the bitches screaming on the "Sexecutioner," this is a must. Now the only thing missing is that NON-WASHABLE blood and guts from the live show. But that's only cool about once a year anyways. Finally a well-produced record by the band that comes from way past Uranus.

- Cold-Iron

HARM FARM

Spawn, lp
Alias

I'm always up to listenin to new bands/music, but maybe someone else should have gotten this one. Harm Farm are together and on the money, and they seem to let loose at times, but it never did anything for me. Country, folk, and bizarre influences creep up everywhere. The most impressive part is Noah Chasin's fiddle playing - it works amazingly well with the structures of the music. Produced by SST's Henry Kaiser.

- Tom A.

HIS NAME IS ALIVE

Livonia, lp

4AD

A few seconds into this lp, you might think this is another one of those British "atmosphere" bands. Being on a label like 4AD doesn't help either. Even as I type these words, I'm doing exactly what I don't want to do - pigeonhole them. Just consider 4AD a frame of reference. Here's the real dirt: Livonia is a compilation of sorts, featuring songs culled from the band's three previous tapes (Riotousness And Postrophe, His Name Is Alive, and I Had Sex With God), all homegrown and ignored by almost everyone except Ivo Watts-Russell (4AD's head honcho). HNIA are an American band from Livonia, Michigan (hence the title). The main songwriter and instrumentalist is Warren Defever - not a household name to anyone but Elvis Hitler fans (he's their bassist). The choir-like vocals are split up between Angela Carozzo and Karin Oliver, and fit the music like a silken glove. At times, it's thin veils of sound layered over one another, but never too confusing. In other spots, it's just one continual ebb of sound, almost ghostlike. The delicate voices never grate, doing justice to the supernatural, dark, and mysterious lyrical themes. Listen to this in the dark and you can feel the sounds swim through the air like spirits. It's a rare record that can scare you and put you at ease at the same time. Livonia is that record. Hopefully, HNIA will finally get the attention they so richly deserve. Their second lp is already recorded so keep your fingers crossed.

- Jodi S.

HEADS UP!

Soul Brother Crisis Intervention, lp

Emergo

When I saw Heads Up! for the first time - at 1989's NMS - my body was groovin' and my head was banging and I thought they were pretty cool... But that was before white funk bands became a dime a dozen, and based on this lp, you'd have trouble getting even that much for these mooks. The production by Albert Bouchard seems designed to make Heads Up! sound as much like Faith No More as possible, with a heavy, churning guitar sound. Mostly, this sounds like four white guys from Long Island who got tired of playing hardcore and decided to try funk, keeping the socially and politically oriented lyrics and just changing the beat and the tempo. That's fine, but somebody should tell them that a little soul would help too.

- Jim T.

HOUSE OF LARGE SIZES

Heat Miser, lp

Toxic Shock, Box 43787, Tucson AZ 85733

Can't think of any words to describe House Of Large Sizes that wouldn't make them sound like a hundred other bands out there selling their wares. So I'll stay away from specifics and say that this is yet another absolutely fine guitar rockin' album, surprisingly meaty sounding for a three piece. The Cher cover ("Half Breed") is a bit frightening, however. Kneejerk 70's revisionism aside, "Heat Miser" is definitely worth a spin.

- Sal C.

IMITATION LIFE

Ice Cubes and Sugar

Skyclad/Veebltronics

Never mind the 60's psych look of the jacket, this isn't just a leftover from the mid-80's paisley revival. Simple chords and great vocals make for a garage-surf-psychedeli-early 80's pop sound that works. These ex-Jerseyans admit to being Springsteen fans but even that's partially forgivable, since they can still make a decent album, all the while giving us lp fans an extra cut instead of the CD crowd. Imitation Life is progressing without forgetting their roots.

- Tom B.



Photo by Jim Testa

JAWBREAKER

JANE'S ADDICTION
Ritual de lo Habitual, lp
Warner Bros.

I was psyched for this follow up to Nothing's Shocking and it was well worth the wait. For newcomers, Jane's combines great, bouncy drumming/rhythms with slightly metal-influenced innovative guitar playing and recognizable, insane vocals that capture angst and emotion. There's more than just superb music and lyrics, there's art too; the front cover, and a letter composition addressed "To The Mosquitos," which is an insightful piece on current affairs and the band's stand on them, add a lot to this package. Jane's Addiction create more than the average band without coming off pretentious and annoying. On the Top 10 for 1990!

- Tom A.

JAWBREAKER

Unfun, lp
Shredder, 181 Shipley St., San Francisco CA 94107

I've been struggling to describe the sound of this record all summer; deadline time is here and I have to write this review, but I still can't figure out how to describe this except to say that it's infectiously musical hardcore with ambiguous but provoking lyrics, and I've played it more these past few months than any other record. Okay, the production's shit, and on first listen, a lot of it sounds the same, mostly due to Blake Schwarzenbach's one-dimensional, gargle-with-Drano vocals. But the more you listen to it, the more you hear.... Weird little guitar hooks, bass runs you didn't catch the first few times through, amazing drumming, bits of vocals that don't really make sense, like snatches of conversation you overhear on a train that you can't get out of your head. Buy it, play it, love it. That's an order.

- Jim T.

LAURA LOVE
Z Therapy, CD
PO Box 30853, Seattle WA 98103

This self-released CD is a showcase for the talents of singer/songwriter Laura Love, and I suspect it was made more for the ears of A&R men than any other audience. But just for the record, Ms. Love is a folksinger in the new style, equally comfortable doing the solo/acoustic thing or playing in front of a perky country-rock combo, with an elegant voice and an ear for melody. Given the current popularity of this sort of thing, her gifts may well win her a large audience soon.

LOVE/HATE
Black Out In The Red Room, lp
CBS

Image-wise, these four Sunset Strip alumni look like very other cloned Guns 'N Roses bands - sleazy and unshaven, ripped Levi's, cutoff shirt, and boots, along with a cigarette dangling from the corner of their mouths. But unlike every other wannabe group that comes out of the land of bikinis, tans, and bars, bars, bars, Love/Hate actually have talent.

With enough catchy hooks in their tunes to reel in a sea of fish (as well as all the young and impressionable Bon Joviates and Skid Rowaholics), Love/Hate look poised to pick up the sagging Hard Rock slack while acts like Warrant, Skid Row, and White Lion prepare new albums. Grooving in the vein of old Aerosmith, Kix, and AC/DC while continually serving up a feast of raunch 'n roll lyrics, this lp (complete with warning sticker - Boooo!) is 1990's finest ass kickin', ball grabbin', serious, party-time rock'n roll album.

- Craig D.

MAZZY STAR
She Hangs Brightly, lp
Rough Trade

It came mysteriously in the mail. A lonesome cassette with no credits or presskit. When I popped it in the tape deck, something sweet and soulful came from my speakers. A mixture of Cowboy Junkies with lead vocals akin to Harriet Wheeler (of The Sundays). Beautiful ballads came forth about the usual predicaments of the heart: lost love, missing you, "please reconsider your love," and so on. However, unlike the Junkies, there are jived up tunes which don't promote sleep, and countrified tracks that are more on the funky side than in the Randy Travis family. It's almost hard to put my finger on it. Production-wise, the album almost sounds like a demo, which provides a nice touch. A far away feeling is creating, providing a haunting, poetic aura. This is a fine rainy day album. Look for it.

- Debi R.

NEE TUMI
More Than Life Itself, lp
Proton, 529 7th St #510, Minneapolis MN 55415

The Minneapolis music scene is sometimes taken for granted in NY/NJ. Hoboken's ever-growing underground has focused our attention to NJ clubs, and with NYC only a PATH ride away, we tri-state dwellers are fortunate to have a variety of top notch dives nearby to see the best on the New Music circuit. Yet, next to Athens, GA's notorious alternative music turnover, there hasn't been a scene to compare to Minneapolis. Fresh from the Twin Cities, Nee Tumi (pronounced "Nay Too-mee") is a fusion of more than a dozen musicians who could be described as a rock orchestra. They create sounds that are eclectic and beautiful; trouble is, half this album shows the group trying a bit too hard, producing tracks a bit excessive with ideas.

Side one is an impressive blend of melodic tunes, swelling with lovely piano chords and jazz sax. Composers Richard Ziegler and J. Russell Peterson develop fun songs which lie on the edge. Each piece is diverse, yet quirky in its own right. Unfortunately havoc strikes with side two, which is clogged with synthesizers, eerie voice overs and endless patterns.

All things considered, "More Than Life Itself" shows promise. Despite my nit picking, there are a few nice original tunes. If they cut down on the blare and not strain their muscles so much, they could be incredible. Meanwhile, Minneapolis searches for its next Prince.

- Debi R.

PALADINS
Let's Buzz, lp
Alligator

R&B and rockabilly from a So. California three-piece favoring three-minute songs. Gutsy and authentic, not at all like that Stray Cats shit from a few years back. Laden with rave ups and two steps similar to Buddy Holly's style. A gritty no-frills neo-classic!

- Tom B.

PAVEMENT
Demolition Plot J-7, 7" EP
Drag City, Box 476867, Chicago IL 60647

Last year, out of nowhere (or somebody's basement in California), came the little 7" that could. It was called "Slay Tracks 1933-1989" by a group called Pavement. U-ground enthusiasts, rock critters and so-called "hipsters" picked up on this minor disturbance and praised it to high heaven. Those who didn't get it then can cheerfully fork over a month's rent for a copy now. It even found its way into the hands of those British



Photo by Jim Testa

PAVEMENT

soccer fans, The Wedding Present, who covered the song "Box Elder." Enough history, on to the future. Pavement scream the future of alternative/college/indie rock, kicking with a furious blast of fuzz, buzz, and spuzz. All six songs are great garagey-type r&r, with an experimental twist. Not experimental as played by a bunch of art-fags, but experimental in that there are a lot of different sounds to deal with, such as distant, telephone-like vocals and treated guitars. Pay \$3 while you can, otherwise you'll need Aunt Rose's inheritance for this one.

- Jodi S.

PRIMUS

Frizzle Fry, lp
Caroline

Primus are Caroline's entry into the very hot (at least at the time I'm writing this) of funk-metal. But these Bay Area dudes put a little different spin on the ball. Try to picture Rush-style art rock fused with a dead-on Funkadelic rhythm section. Ok, don't picture it. I know it sounds bad, but trust me - this stuff cooks! And our contestants receive extra credit for supremely goofy lead vocals by Bassmaster Les Claypool, and lyrics that couldn't possibly make sense to anybody on this planet. Bravo!

- Sal C.

PRISONSHAKE

I'm Really Fucked Now, all formats
Scat

This package has something for everyone - a 7", a cassette, a CD, and an lp. If you think you can just tape one from a friend, you're the one who's fucked, 'cos there's different stuff on each format. The 7" is a collaboration with My Dad Is Dead, the cassette is some outtakes, the CD is a work in progress (rumored to be a double lp) and the lp is the strongest of all, a compilation of this Cleveland band's previous singles. Collector scum will love this - limited edition, colored vinyl, etc. What to say about the band? Suffice it to say that Prisonshake beats ass. Cleveland doesn't sound like such a bad place after all.

- Jodi

There's almost too much to listen to in this package - I'm kinda amazed Scat sent us a promo, the damn thing must cost a fortune to put out. I disagree with Jodi, though... I favor the CD over the lp. Sound? Cleveland garage-rock, powerful chunky guitar-bass-drums rock 'n roll, I guess -- if you're already a fan of Starvation Army, Pere Ubu's more mainstream material, or Death Of Samantha's less quirky stuff, you'll eat this up.

- Jim

PSYCHEFUNKAPUS

Psychefunkapus, lp
Atlantic

Besides having the coolest name in all of rock 'n roll, Psychefunkapus (actually an amalgam of "psychedelic" and "funk") also claim one of the strongest and funkiest albums to their credit. Meshing together everything from Jimi Hendrix to Sly & The Family Stone to Fishbone and even Genesis, this San Francisco fivesome brilliantly meld a myriad of musical genres into one album and, at times, even the same song.

With thought-provoking tunes like "We Are The Young" and "Regeneration," along with a cover of Hendrix' "Freedom" and the ultra-Fishboney "Slut Child," the Chili Peppersesque "Jesus Crispies," and the hilarious "Young Love Is A Bitch," you'd be hard pressed to find a stronger album out nowadays.

- Craig D.

SENSELESS THINGS

Postcard C.V., lp
Way Cool (English Import)

This came in the mail and actually sat unopened for a couple of weeks before curiosity got the better of me. The result? I've finally forgiven the English for Duran Duran, and after an 8 year boycott, I'm back to loving English pop. This sort of catchy

power-pop has been the Flavor of the Month with the British music press for months now, and from what I've heard of it, Teen Age Fan Club have the best chords, Mega City Four have the best songs, Ned's Atomic Dustbin have the best haircuts, but Senseless Things beats all of them. If Teenage F.C. is "pop," then these guys are Jolt Cola - twice the sugar and four times the caffeine. Energy galore on every song - they almost play too fast, if that's possible - along with great snotty teen anthem lyrics and a buzzing guitar sound that's sort of like The Records on Ecstasy.

- Jim T.

SHONEN KNIFE, lp

Gasatanka/Rockville

With everyone from the big wigs at Flipside to Pat Fear raving about this band, and then the release of that double-lp tribute compilation, I was wondering what all the hype about Japan's Shonen Knife was about. It sounded too good to be true - and it was. This album has 21 songs, mixed and matched from their various releases. The music wouldn't sound out of place in an overdubbed karate movie or Godzilla flick. It's mellow, mid tempo poppy music with funny lyrics (sung in Japanese). Nothing ever holds your attention but it doesn't piss you off either. Kinda like the coleslaw at the diner - just kind of there.

- Tom A.

SHUDDER TO THINK

Ten Spot, lp
Dischord

The first Dischord release in a long time that I not only don't like but actually can't stand to hear for any length of time, Shudder To Think combine Fugazi-like syncopations with male



false vocals and a kinky weirdness that probably tries to be a lot more daring and offbeat than it really is. The chords twitch every which way, but it seems like that's more because these mooks can't write a good pop song than because they're driven to be weird and artsy. Okay, I don't actually know anybody in this band, but it's a good bet that Jad Fair, they're not. Let me put it this way. There's a difference between idiot savant and idiot. Ok?

- Jim T.

STEEL POLE BATH TUB

"Lurch," 6 song EP

Boner, Box 2081, Berkeley, CA 94702

A monster followup to one of my favorite records of last year, SPBT's debut, "Butterfly Love." Nobody does the sonic feedback distortion mindfuck thing better than these guys, while still maintaining a core of solid buzzing melody, capped off with wildly imaginative album art and extras. This time around, the record comes with full-length comic book which illustrates the EP's surrealistic lyrics, a terrific bonus. There's also a bonus track which isn't mentioned anywhere on the record, but which I think is the song "Swerve" from their "UFO" video, as well as a cover of Ozzy's "Paranoid" that'll have Satan moshing down in Hell. If you damage your mind with only one record this year, make it Steel Pole Bath Tub.

- Jim T.

TEENAGE FAN CLUB

A Catholic Education, CD

Matador

I love this record, and you can bet I'm gonna join the throngs of screaming teens waiting to embrace these boys from Glasgow. Screaming critics, more like it. Lotsa people are lumping this one in the "Dinosaur Jr. influenced" category. Get real. Ok, so there are a few (very few) Mascis-isms here, but it's not nearly as loud or distorted as Dino Jr. TFC have songs where the guitar is sprightly and melodic, not reduced to waves of white noise. Kinda like The Cure meets The Stones and they play Yo La Tengo covers and sometimes Mark Lanegan will come by and sing a few of the slower ones, but as always, my comparison doesn't help anyone figure out what this sounds like. Just buy it and make Cosloy happy, make yourself even happier, and if you want Dinosaur, go buy their Sub-Pop single.

- Jodi

THINKING FELLERS UNION LOCAL 282

Tangle, lp

Thwart Productions, PO Box 2827, Oakland CA 96409

I was at my day job, getting bored... so there was this record lying on the table, see? "Thinking Fellers Union Local 282," I mused. "Kinda like Oddfellows Local 151, by R.E.M., huh?" I picked it up and asked Brian Long, one of my co-workers, what it sounded like. "Well, he said, "Thinking Fellers take pointers from the Fall and Pere Ubu, but grope with marvelous dynamic instincts through the last decade's noise-grind in creating this urgent and artful album." "Jeez, Brian," I said, shaking my head, "you should write for Rockpool or something." For those of you who aren't clear on what he said, I'll explain: TFUL282 are strange, but stranger still, they're accessible for the most part. There are tunes here, but they're really twisted and off-kilter, full of found sounds and weird voices. "Sister Hell," which is my favorite, is like a deranged surf tune. For description's sake, they're like a less psychotic Butthole Surfers. But not really. Don't let this one get away, be the first one on your block to join Local 282.

- Jodi S.

TWO NICE GIRLS

Like A Version, lp

Rough Trade

A Texas-based all-girl band. The Roches meet K.D. Laing? Their cover/medley of Donna Summer's "I Feel Love" and Bad Finger's "I Feel Like Making Love" is smooth, breezy, and reduced to a countrified bouncy rhythm. It's a nice start to a



STEEL POLE BATH TUB

relatively uninteresting album which unearths the Carpenter's old hit, "Top Of The World." Cover songs are all over this EP, including a slow, goofy rendition of the "Speed Racer" theme. I'd rather watch the cartoon. The only original tune is a lesbian lament called "I Spent My Last \$10 (On Birth Control And Beer), something about a gay female whose head is turned by a guy named Lester. Rough Trade's presskit states that this "created quite a stir among critics...seemed to stumble all over themselves to appear unruffled." Yeah, right. It made me trip over my shoes; made me go tee-hee. Sometimes singers go the distance to be different by using whimsy or schmaltz in their material. Apart from some nice sounds, that's all this album tries to do, and does so obviously.

- Debi R.

WARRIOR SOUL

Last Decade, Dead Century, lp

DGC

This is one totally bummed out band. Yes, we all know the world isn't perfect, but Warrior Soul endlessly harp on the subject, slowly bludgeoning it to a torturous and painful death. I mean, is it really necessary for them to sing, "I am the child of the new generation/the product of total frustration/Lost in the void of the social soup?"

These angst-ridden lyrics run dry fairly quickly, and along with the band's dark & gloomy music, serve only in downplaying

the fine performances by guitarist John Ricco and singer Kory Clarke. Ricco's ultra-distorted but incredibly melodic guitar riffs will get even the tamest listener's head a'banging, while Clarke's desperate, pleading vocals will hit a nerve with any half-breathing human being.

With just a little lighter touch, Warrior Soul could probably have themselves a hit record. Until then, these dismal, dark, despondent, and downcast characters are destined for cult status to the maniacally depressed.

- Craig D.

THE WILD FLOWERS

Tales Like These, lp
Slash

This record is another of those AOR shoo-ins. It's ten cuts of generic commercial, almost garagey, pop, sounding at times like Midnight Oil, Tom Petty on quaaludes or a John Cougar cassette in a Walkman with the batteries running down. These guys must like Neil Young too. These guys are only memorable because they obviously have talent (esp in the guitar dept.) but there's stuff out there that's better than this.

- Jodi S.

BOB WISEMAN SINGS WRENCH TUTTLE

In Her Dream, lp
Atlantic

Where has this guy been? His creativity is incredible. The bluesy personality he exudes on record is infectious. In Her Dream is an exciting, quirky, socially aware lineup of songs to make you think, make you dance, and make you dream. His way with the blues is tender and beautiful, providing wayward guitar pickings incorporated in whimsical melodies. Songs come from everyday life: the news, answering machines, television. Experimentalism abounds from cut to cut. I wouldn't say this is a masterpiece, but it comes close.

- Debi R.

H.P. ZINKER

Matador

The presskit for this record wasn't all that useful, since all the articles were in German, but in this case it doesn't matter. The music does all the talking here, and boy, does it speak volumes. This six-song EP is by two displaced Austrians (now New Yorkers), Hans Platzgumer on guitars and drum machine, and Frank Peumpel on bass. They both sing. You might think they'd sound like Happy Flowers (lotsa people call these fellas a "noise" band) but they don't. They're quite melodic, bass heavy with a bit of feedback, like a lot of other NY bands. The songs are all single-length (single strong, too) except for two that don't really seem like they're too long, 'cos they're so convoluted and attention-holding that time flies. Decent production (by Wharton Tiers) brings out the interplay between vocals and guitar. Can't wait for the followup.

- Jodi S.

COMPILATIONS

MUSIC TO MAKE YOUR EARS HURT

Black & Blue

G.G. Allin told me that this label was ripping him off left & right. But then again, what kind of credibility does G.G. Allin have? (Although I do tend to believe him.) In short, this compilation isn't really as good as it is diverse. Winning cuts go to Bloody Mess & The Scabs and G.G. Everything else - mostly by unknowns - falls into the mediocre category, while the thrash metal bands should be ignored. There is one outstanding cut by a band called Afterbirth, but after that, I wouldn't pay more than \$5 for this.

- John L.

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Fanzines

FACTSHEET 5 #37 \$3

6 Arizona Ave, Rensselaer NY 12144

The mother to us all, in a way, Factsheet 5 used to be "the zine about zines," but editor Mike Gunderloy has been steadily beefing up the coverage of music, video, computer software and books from the underground press, so that now I consider FF5 an absolutely indispensable resource about any medium that interests me. The zine reviews still remain FF5's strongest point; I routinely find myself writing away for six or seven new titles I'd never heard of before from every issue. When you compound that over FF5's 37 issues, you begin to realize just how many of us lunatics are out there publishing our own magazines.

ABSOLUTE ZIPPO #13 \$1 ppd

1550 Mann St, Pinole CA 94564

A collection of original and entertaining short stories, essays, and comix, not necessarily about punk rock but definitely from a punk perspective. My favorite is the epic fable wherein Ian MacKaye confronts Ian Stuart of Skewdriver in a final battle of good vs. evil. But just so you don't think this is a straightedge zine, there's also an essay in defense of cigarette smoking. Good reading.

ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVES #1 \$1

PO Box 285, Patterson NY 12563

Lots of big pictures and big print, interviews with Token Entry, Payback and Inside Out, and some reviews. Not bad for a first issue, but they have to learn a few things about shrinking down their type and screening their photos.

BACTERIA OF DECAY #3 \$1 ppd

63 Lennox Ave, Buffalo NY 14226

Half-size zine with a mixture of band interviews, reviews, a few poems, some essays, and lots of drawings (in lieu of any photos).

BARKING SPIDER #3 50 cents ppd

% Johnny Spider, 1800 S. Pantano Rd #1114, Tucson AZ 85710

Half size zine with poems, reviews, and a few extras, like the funny piece by Mike Thain on "what I did on my summer vacation."

BIG SWOLLEN TOE #3 \$1(?)

% Jon V., 101 Clark Woods Dr, Inman SC 29349

Short reviews, some art and literature, and mostly handdrawn layouts make this one a little different. #3 has an interview with Nirvana.

BLAH BLAH BLAH #3 \$1

% Tom Russell, 32 Breezy Point Rd, Little Silver NJ 07739

Mostly skateboarder interviews and photos, although there's a piece on vegetarianism and a band interview. Tom finds some real insiders in the sk8 world to talk to, which would make this of special interest if you're really into skateboarding.

BOILED ANGEL #5 \$2(?)

% Mike Diana, 519 Cleveland Ave SW, Largo FL 34640

This is the "Satanic Sex Issue" of this half sized zine, which mostly means weird cartoons, stories and poems that vilify, ridicule, and denigrate religion (Christianity, mostly). Obviously looking to offend, but the outrageousness here seems calculated to preach to the converted.

BRAIN CANCER #1 \$1

PO Box 31, Romeo MI 48065

Mostly a collection of editor Mike Canich's psychedelic cartoons, plus some record reviews in the back. One of those very personal projects that gets you inside the head of an original (and probably somewhat troubled) thinker.

BULLPRESS #3 \$2

% D. Unger, RD3 Edwards St. Box 249A, Binghamton NY 13901

You're liable to find almost anything in Bullpress - zine and record reviews, band interviews, comix, collages of newspaper clippings and graphics, and lots of free ads for underground zines, records, and tapes. Since the editor calls himself Darryl Pestilence, you get the idea behind the general slant of things here.

BUTT UGLY #2 \$1

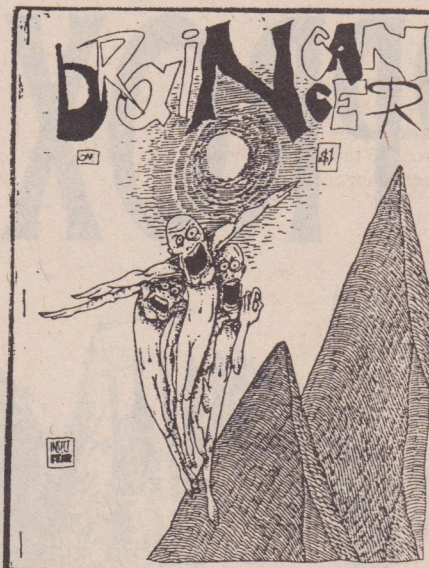
% Cory, 701 S. Grand Ave, Waukesha WI 53186

A bunch of band interviews and reviews, but there's something about the layouts and photos (very good, by the way) that sets this apart from the average punkzine. Good job.

CLOT #6 \$1

PO Box 33330, Northglenn CO 80233

A big tabloid newspaper zine that concentrates on Colorado's metal and punk scene. Lots to read and tons of cool photos. Definitely a steal at a buck.



DARK CHAOS #13 \$2

% Ed Stastny, 9018 Westridge Dr, Omaha NE 68124

Mostly cartoons from the darker side of existence, with a few reviews thrown in. Keep me interested until I was through with it, which is quite an accomplishment nowadays. 1/2 size on legal paper.

DEAD BORING #1 \$1

% Mark Plaid, 487 290 St. Toledo OH 43611

Well, if nothing else, I finally learned the fate of Ken Cousino's YIPES! fanzine (Ken moved to Alaska and dropped out of sight). I guess I can finally take him off my mail list. But anyway, editor Mark Plaid was the resident artist at Yipes and this is his own stab at zinedom, a 1/2 size endeavor with the usual punkzine interviews, reviews, and comix (altho there is an interview with George "Sulu" Takei of Star Trek fame).

DECONTROL #10 billion 2 stamps

PO Box 404, Duluth GA 30136

A slim zine with a few reviews, a Mercyland interview, and an anti-metal editorial. Apparently there are slim issues for free like this one and meatier ones available for a dollar, all with confusing made-up issue numbers and published by "a 16 year old kid with fascist parents." A good sense of humor at work here, anyway.

EROSION #2 25 cents + 2 stamps
2134 S. 12 St, Manitowoc, WI 54220

A 1/2 size punkzine with the usuals. This issue has Die Kreuzen, Covent Garden, and Inspector 12 interviews.

FIVE-O ZINE, #6 \$1
100 Stoney Gate, Carlisle MA 01741

Mostly great skateboarding photos with original layouts and snippets of cool text, plus a few punkzine staples like record reviews. Visually, a real treat.

FREE THOUGHT #3 \$1.25
% Eric, 5219 Wyoming Rd, Bethesda MD 20816

This is the zine whose first two issues came with color photos (!), leading me to believe the editor's dad owned a copy shop. Now I'm thinking he owns a bank, since this issue has moved to a color glossy cover on glossy paper. Very clean layouts and lots of photos (some of them didn't reproduce very well, though) with a very thorough and insightful interview with Vic from Inside Out and Enquirer Fanzine on Krishna's growing influence in the punk scene.

LIFE IS A JOKE #6 \$1
2288 Hawk, Simi Valley CA 93065

Lots of cartoons, non sequiturs, and bits of prose, designed to befuddle and amuse.

METAL MELTDOWN #8 \$1.50
PO Box 824, Severna Park, MD 21146

Seemingly endless array of thrash, death metal, and hardcore, from the famous (Voivod) to the hopelessly obscure. Wall to wall metal coverage here, headbangers check it out!

ON SITE #9 \$1
230 W 105 St, #5C, NYC 10025

1/2 size zine published by the band Fire In The Kitchen, always a tasteful and literate look at the alternative zine. Sort of like Conflict without all the attitude, this is all text, no graphics, just lots of well-written reviews.

OPTOPHOBIA #6 \$1
W 272 N 2141 Fieldhack Dr, Pewaukee WI 53072

A punkzine made special by the layouts, which are always a feast for the eyes and usually spiced up by cool cartoons by the enigmatic No. 4. A personal favorite so check it out.

POPPIN' ZITS #7 \$1
1800 Market St #141, San Francisco CA 94102

A fanzine that sets out to confuse, just to start by having the staple on the wrong side. Then there's a collection of stories, art, and reviews which can pretty much go anywhere. Always an adventure.

PROFANE EXISTENCE #5 \$1
PO Box 8722, Minneapolis MN 55408

From the white on black layouts to the scene reports to the letters & columns to the heavy coverage of the anarchy movement, this is the midwestern Maximum Rock 'N Roll, and apparently deliberately so. Funny how they're so anarchist and anti-status quo on the editorial pages and yet they send a very professional ad rate card with every issue (and they've got their own record label too.) Punks with capital, always a dangerous combination. Along with MRR and Hippycore, probably the best example of how a grassroots organization with non-mainstream ideals can succeed in the real world. Shit, I can't even get Jersey Beat to break even, let alone start a record label...

SHREDDING MATERIAL #5 \$2
2515 Bidle Rd, Middletown MD 21769

A 1/2 zine punkzine with an accent on the Gothic scene, although this issue has a good interview with Bobby Steele of NJ's Undead.

SPILLED GUTS #2 \$1
% Chris Wagner, 12 White Oak Way, Trenton NJ 08618

A slim issue as this zine continues with a new editor. Interviews with Turning Point and Mouthpiece, some zine reviews, and some photos.



SUBURBAN VOICE #29 \$2.50
PO Box 1605, Lynna MA 01903

Al's going the record w/zine route, so this issue has a 7" with Crawlppy and Sheer Terror, as well as the usual fine interviews and record reviews. One of the longest-lived and well written punkzines around.

TOO HECTIC #2 \$1
111 Botany St, Garfield NJ 07026

Mostly a punkzine with the band interviews and record reviews, although there's also a section on animal rights from an anti-hunting perspective, starting with a personal recollection and then some Friends Of Animals material.

UNI FORCE #7 \$3
% Mark Sawickis, 224 Prospect Rd C26, Bloomington IL 61704

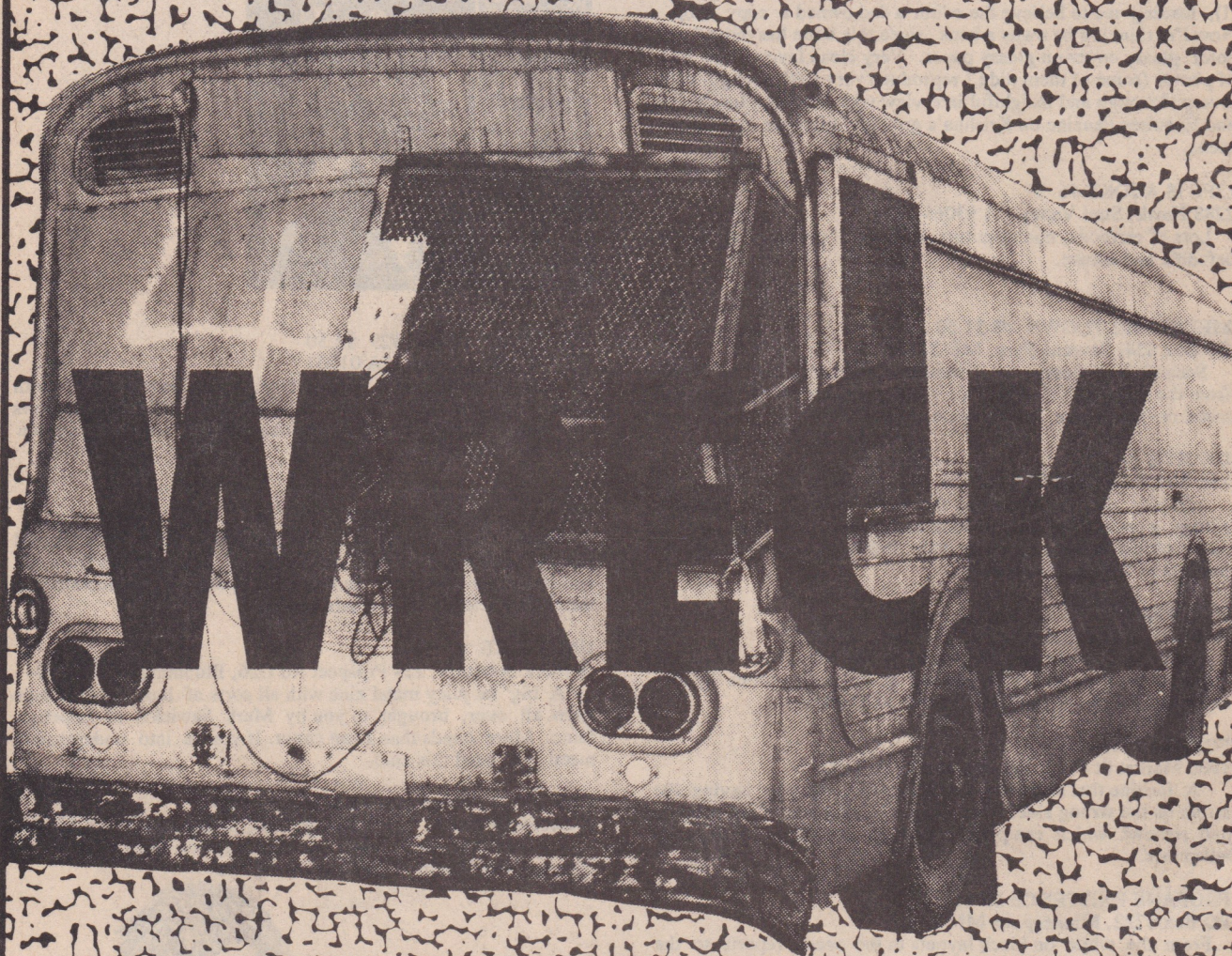
A big fat juicy metal zine with all sorts of loud hairy bands from all over, brought to you by Mark Sawickis of Impetigo fame. More bands than I can count. If you're into underground metal, you need this zine.

UNSEEN BY MOST PHOTOZINE #1 \$1
% Scooter Hanson, 11788 Red Fox Dr, Maple Grove MN 55369

An excellent photo zine full of cool action shots of all you favorite punk bands. A great buy for a buck.



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